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Hou Yifan on the rampage in Grand Prix

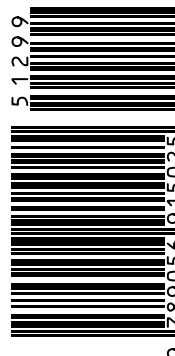
Analysis
by World
Champions
Magnus
Carlsen and
Hou Yifan!

Norway Chess
Karjakin again!

Dubai
Carlsen claims
rapid and blitz
world titles

Nigel Short
Tyranny

ISBN 978-90-5691-502-5



JAN TIMMAN PORTRAYS
LONE WOLF 'LJUBO'



MATTHEW SADLER
PUZZLES? MUST BE EASY!



JUST CHECKING
LAURENT FRESSINET



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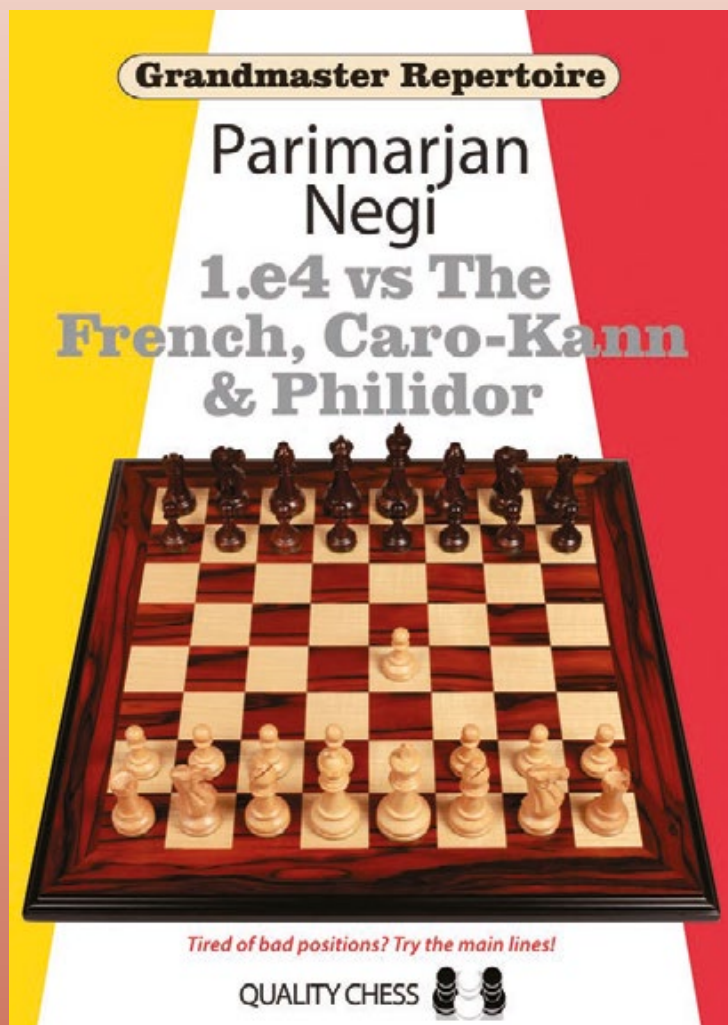
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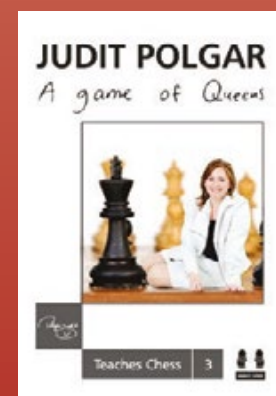
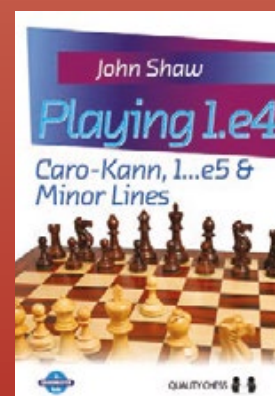
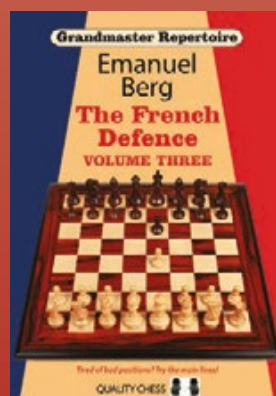


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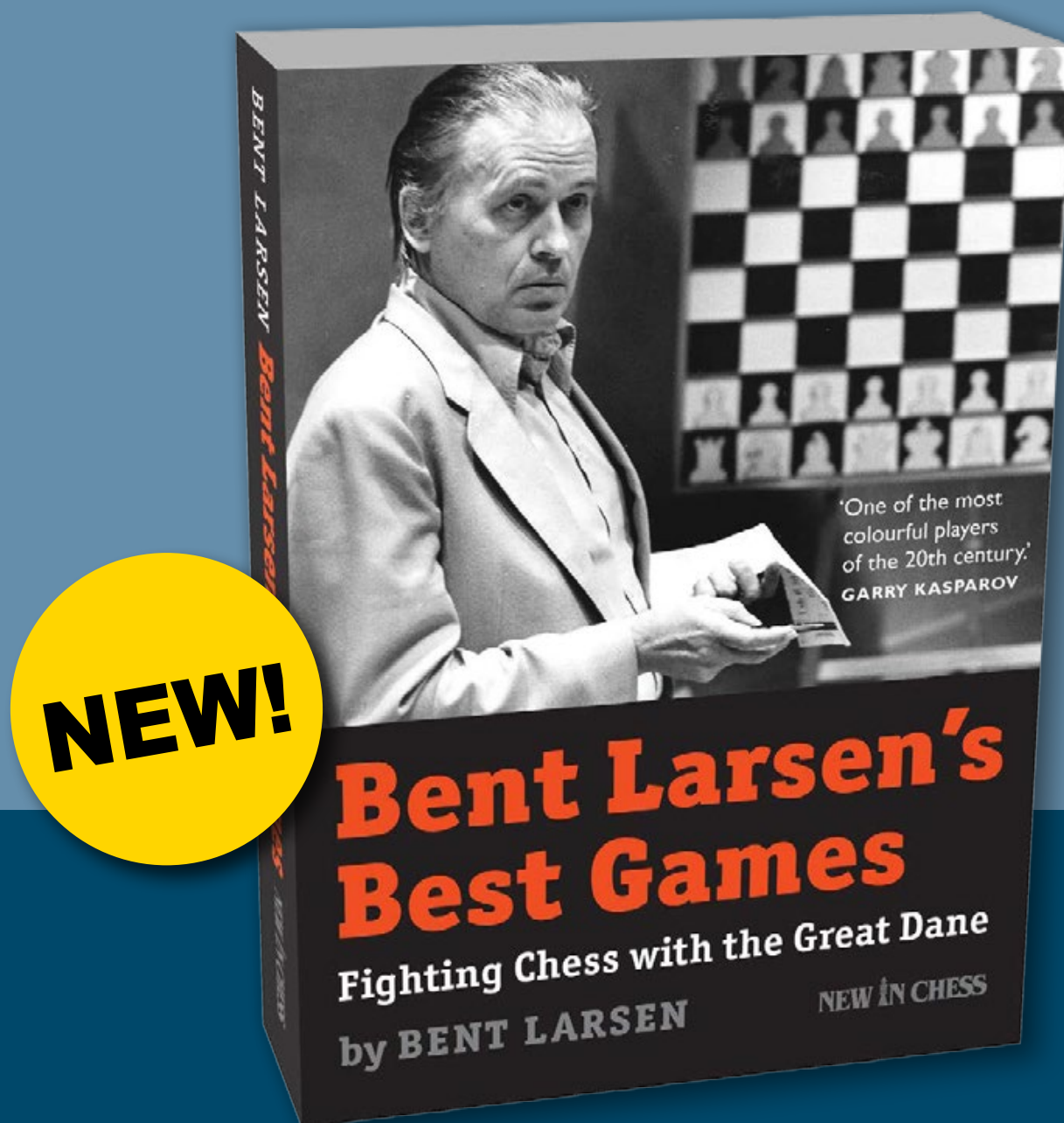


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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

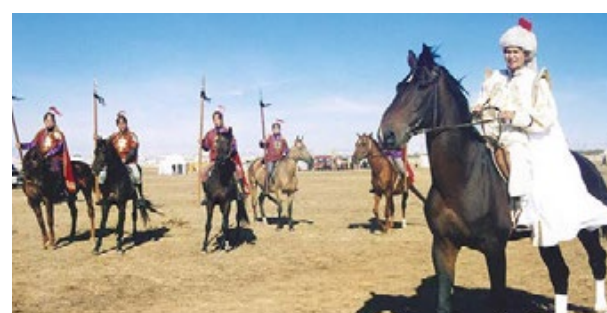
Yochanan Afek, Simen Agdestein, Jeroen Bosch, Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, Laurent Fressinet, Anish Giri, Sergey Karjakin, Matthew Sadler, Nigel Short, Jan Timman, Loek van Wely, Hou Yifan

PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

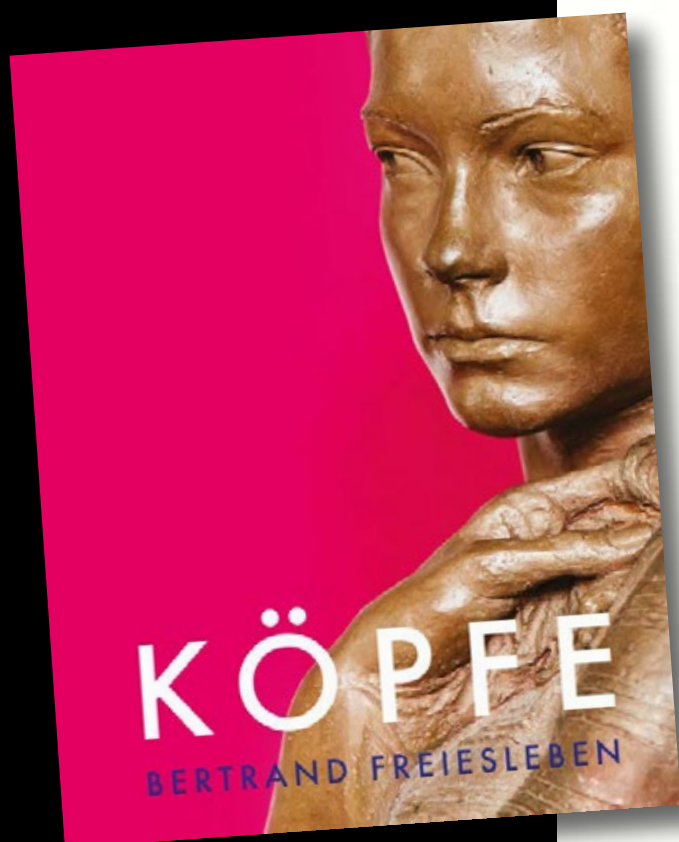
Alina l'Ami, Bas Beekhuizen, Torsten Behl, Peter Doggers, Dagobert Kohlmeyer, Ernst Potters, Cathy Rogers

COVER

Hou Yifan: Alina l'Ami



'Meeting Garry Kasparov at his peak, however, was monstrously scary compared to playing Magnus. Kasparov would go for your throat right from the start and was satisfied with nothing less than cutting you into pieces.' – Simen Agdestein



Bertrand Freiesleben – Köpfe
ISBN 978-3-89479-804-8

Talking Heads

At one time, he was a successful conceptual artist in New York, but in the mid-90s, Bertrand Freiesleben (Lübeck, 1967) returned to his old love. A trained sculptor, he began to dedicate himself to 'heads'. Busts of politicians, actors, snowboard superstars, photographers, people that fascinate him. Chess players. The three chess greats that the Berlin-based artist has immortalized so far: Viktor Kortchnoi, Vladimir Kramnik (see New In Chess 2010/8) and Levon Aronian (see photo). Freiesleben's favourite works have now been collected in a stylish book, simply called *Köpfe* (Heads). In 360 pages and 500 full-colour photographs, the sculptures are presented together with impressions from the models sitting for him – sessions that are more like performances, as Freiesleben talks and interacts with his subjects, trying to project into his art what fascinates him in them.







Napoleon

In your article 'Moves and Movies: Stanley Kubrick the Chess Fanatic' in *New In Chess* 2014/4, you quote Kubrick's widow, Christiane, as saying that Stanley believed Napoleon might have learned to control himself better had he played chess. But the great French general did play the game. In Irving Chernev's *100 Best Short Games of Chess* (Simon and Schuster, 1955) he gives two examples: one in 1796, when the general was 33, and the second, a year before his death in 1820, when he was 51. In the first, he uses Alekhine's Defence before it was invented and in both he plays with Tal-like brio. But his opponents, alas, were far too weak to truly test Napoleon.

Leon Arden
London, United Kingdom

Editorial postscript:

We gladly refer to Edward Winter's thoroughly researched article *Napoleon Bonaparte and Chess* on his website chesshistory.com. There is plenty of evidence that Napoleon loved to play chess all his life, but there is no reason to believe that he was a strong player.

Samuel Reshevsky

Although Nigel Short makes some good points in 'I'm a Believer' (*New In Chess* 2014/4), I would like to defend Sammy Reshevsky's reputation which has been attacked in a questionable manner.

There is no evidence that Reshevsky's refusal to play on the Shabbat was a 'charade'. I had my own experience with this. In 1986, I was paired against him in Round 4 of the New York International. Reshevsky refused to play at the regularly scheduled time on Saturday, and the tournament director did not offer an alternate time. Thus, I received a point by forfeit – unhappily because I was not yet a GM (or even an IM), and a forfeit win in the 9-round tournament eliminated me from norm contention. I had tried in vain to convince Reshevsky to play (he came to the site but would not sit down at the table).

It is hard to believe that Reshevsky's decision to forfeit against a player of

much lower rank was motivated by a desire to irritate an opponent. Rather, Reshevsky was true to his religion.

Incidentally, as Nigel of course knows, asking 'Are you playing for a win?' was accepted as an unambiguous draw offer among many strong players, although it seems outdated now.

Thank you for listening. Reputations are all too easy to unnecessarily tarnished. I wrote this because Reshevsky

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is a very important figure in chess history, and he himself cannot defend his reputation anymore.

GM Alex Fishbein
Summit, NJ, USA

Believers

Nigel Short's remarks about traditional monotheisms may hold for some of its adherents and certain of its sub-traditions, but by no means all. There is much worth rebutting, but I'll confine myself to two points. First, Short states that '[f]aith, by definition, is unreason. If one could prove the existence of God, it wouldn't be faith.' This view of faith is better ascribed to 19th century Dane Søren Kierkegaard than to the Bible or most of Christian history, both of which see faith primarily as trust or confidence in someone or something. We may say we have faith in our position or that Mary will get to the recital in time; likewise, Jesus wasn't enjoining his contemporaneous followers to believe that he existed – preferably without reason – but to place their trust in him – especially after they saw him perform miraculous deeds for three years.

Second, Short more than once suggests that there is a strong tension between a believer's humility with respect to his faith and his 'eager scien-

tific inquiry' and assumption of personal responsibility as a chess player on the other. But why would this be? I've known many religious believers who are intensely curious about the world in general and their various religious faiths in particular (I would include myself here) and have known unbelievers with a breathtaking lack of intellectual curiosity, or who follow the pronouncements of celebrity atheists with all the naïve fervour of a televangelist's devotee. Moreover, intellectually curious believers aren't so in spite of their religious belief, but in many cases because of it, a point which is well (though sadly not universally) attested to in church history, both in creed and in action. Further, practically all of us have very strong beliefs, and while they are defeasible we are only rarely sceptical towards them. Taking many of our fundamental beliefs for granted most of the time (but not necessarily always) while maintaining a critical mind-set towards more compartmentalized fields like chess is par for the course and

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not an illustration of exhausting mental gymnastics. What would be exhausting would be a life where one constantly engages in Cartesian doubt, but I doubt that Short is any more liable to this than those persons of faith he critiques.

Dennis Monokroussos
South Bend, IN, USA

Odious prattle

I'm oft humoured by Short's adolescent sarcasm and juvenile view of life as he spins humorous yarns in his column, but his odious prattle in 'I'm a Believer' in New In Chess 2014/4 angered me as he derided what many subscribers of New In Chess consider sacred. But my upset quickly turned to sorrow as I realized he was honestly voicing his views of religious faith. He is truly a great chess grandmaster, but a poor wood pusher when looking at the chess board of life.

David Timm, MD
Natchez, MS, USA

HAL 9000 gone insane?

It was a joy to read Adam Feinstein's article on Stanley Kubrick and his passion for chess (New In Chess 2014/4), especially the paragraph where the author mentions a number of mistakes that slipped by the film director in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. I believe there are some comments to be made or added regarding these claimed 'mistakes'. For starters, as far as the use of English Descriptive is concerned, I believe it was the most widely used notation at the time (the film is from 1968).

However, the most interesting (and debatable) issue revolves around the mate in two moves incorrectly announced by the computer HAL 9000. It is perfectly possible a keen chess player like Kubrick might have overlooked it... but did he? Perhaps the computer was testing the astronaut Dr. Frank Poole to see if he noticed the mistake? Or was HAL 9000 already going insane and Kubrick chose to show one symptom as a chess mistake that no computer would normally make? In this same vein, the black move 'Queen to Bishop Three' might not be another oversight



Fabiano Caruana faces Welsh champion Howard Williams at the 2011 European Team Championship in Porto Carras. The Italian won.

by Kubrick but rather a(nother) nod to chess players in the audience, because it is announced as if played from the white side of the board.

Pedro F. Hegoburu
Buenos Aires, Argentina

A record?

Well done to Roddy McKay on his achievement (New In Chess 2013/6, p.9) of winning the Scottish Championship with a 42-year gap between his first in 1971 and his most recent in 2013.

However, this prompted me into thinking about my friend Howard Williams and his successes over the years in the Welsh Championship. I knew Howard had won the Welsh the last time he played in it in 2011, but I was unsure as to when he had won his first. Rather than try and find out immediately, I knew Howard would be playing in the Diamond Jubilee (60th) Welsh Championship over Easter 2014, during which I could inspect the trophy.

As it turned out Howard did not win the Welsh in 2014, 'only' finishing equal 2nd unbeaten on 5/7, but upon checking the trophy it transpired that he had first won the Welsh in 1968, so that makes it 43 years between then and his most recent in 2011, which betters (with apologies) Roddy's record by one year!

A remarkable feat about which it is also worth adding Howard won the title, outright or shared, on no less than

18 occasions, spread over 5 of the last 6 decades. He only missed out in the 'noughties', during which he played just once, in 2004, the Golden Jubilee (50th) Championship, and despite being unbeaten on 5½/7, you've guessed it, he again 'only' finished 2nd!

Writing about Howard's international performances is beyond the scope of this letter, but I would briefly like to mention a couple of things. Howard and Roddy were both talented youngsters, so much so they both played in the 1969 World Junior Championship, won decisively by a brilliant rising star, one Anatoly Karpov, but rather surprisingly they only ever played each other once, and then not until 1975, a win for Howard in a Wales-Scotland match in Glasgow.

Howard's international participation more or less came to an end after his eighth consecutive Olympiad in 1986 due to work and family commitments. However, he made a rare appearance in the tough European Team Championship in 2011. He did very well considering the strength of the opposition and his rustiness, the attached photo against Fabiano Caruana being taken before the Wales-Italy match.

Congratulations to Howard on his 43 year National Championship record. Who's to say he won't add to it in years to come, or indeed for Roddy to be in contention again?

Stuart Hutchings
Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom



Rooms and views

Nagging concerns that the Tromsø Olympiad might not take place were finally taken away less than two months before the start of the biggest chess event in the world. With an extra infusion of 12 million Kroner the Norwegian government reacted positively, albeit not wholeheartedly, to the urgent request of the Tromsø organizers to



Tromsø: how to get there and where to stay.

save the event from financial ruin. The amount of close to 1.5 million euros, or close to 2 million dollars, was needed to fill a gap that had arisen due to unforeseen circumstances. While the government maintained that there had been bad financial management, the organizing committee claimed that there were factors at play that they simply could not have predicted. The Tromsø World Cup, which they were obliged to stage in conjunction with the Olympiad, had been far more costly than expected and far more countries had signed up for the Olympiad than they reasonably could have known. The government had little patience with these arguments, but probably relented because they didn't want an Olympiad disaster to jeopardize Norway's bid for the Winter Olympics in 2022.

In addition to this extra subsidy, the organizers managed to save another one million Kroner by renegotiating their deal with the local hotels. But while these developments alleviated their financial stress, they certainly didn't take away all worries. The number of par-

ticipating countries remained record-breakingly high and caused a serious accommodation problem. Extra hotel rooms were found here and there and a ship was rented, but on the eve of the Olympiad all they knew was that they would be able to lodge all participants, but not all accompanying persons – of which there tend to be quite a few at Olympiads. But then, problems invite solutions and this dire shortage had not escaped the inhabitants of Tromsø. Suddenly, a whole new market opened of locals ready to rent out rooms, apartments and even complete houses for the duration of the Olympiad.

Posing challenges

In the meantime, further trouble was brewing – a new problem that might provide extra hotel rooms in an unexpected manner. A mere three weeks before the start of the Olympiad, FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov sent a letter to Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg containing an urgent plea to help all participants in the Olympiad that needed a visa to enter Norway to obtain one. How it is possible that both FIDE and the organizing committee only discovered this problem at such a late stage beats the imagination, but a serious problem it definitely was. Applicants in countries without a Norwegian consulate have to travel to the closest country with one, and they have to do so in person. If a team consists of 12 or 15 members, they cannot send a representative, but all of them have to go. Ilyumzhinov had a point when he wrote: 'I would like to mention this has no precedent in the history of FIDE and probably not in any other sport.'

The reply didn't come from the Norwegian Prime Minister, but from Børge Robertsen, the CEO of the Tromsø Olympiad. We happily cite from his diplomatic letter, which contains some brilliant euphemisms and must have come as a great relief to the applicants in question (not!). 'The Norwegian immigration authorities have a user-friendly website with a clear, easy-to-follow visa application process. The entire process

can be handled online [...]. At the end of the application process a message instructs the individual to book an appointment with an embassy – and it is this final step that has posed challenges.

'In the summer of 2013, an agreement was implemented in the Schengen countries regarding the exchange of biometric data. [...] This means that one must appear at a Norwegian embassy to supply fingerprints. If Norway does not have an official office in a country, then one must go to the closest country with Norwegian ambassadorial representation. We fully understand that this is extremely frustrating if, for example, you are from Gambia and need to travel to Ghana to get a Norwegian visa. The current problem is not that participants will not receive visas, but rather that they may be compelled to travel far to do so. [...]

'We have asked the UDI [the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration – ed.]



Børge Robertsen: brilliant euphemisms.

if there are possible exceptions to this regulation. We have been informed that the Chess Olympiad does not meet the requirements for exemption from this rule. [...]

See for yourself

One cannot exclude the possibility that Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's worries about Norwegian visas were partly inspired by worries about dele-

gates not making it to Tromsø for the FIDE Congress. After all, practically everything he has been doing lately has been connected to the FIDE presidential elections. His 'working visits' to a long list of countries are nothing more than campaign visits, and it remains reprehensible that he continues to use the official FIDE website to report on these. And we won't even mention the fact that using FIDE funds for these trips hardly seems ethical. Besides these impressions from 'working visits' and other information intended to put him in a good light on the FIDE website, there is Ilyumzhinov's official campaign website, Fidefirst.com, where a lot of the reporting is done by Chess News Agency, which is described as 'a prominent online chess news resource'. A funny description for a service that claims to be based in New York, offers a surprising number of positive items about Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and his team, and at regular intervals distributes vehement anti-Garry Kasparov articles written in a language that the Department of Propaganda in North Korea would be proud of.

In any case, it is illuminating (and at times both shocking and amusing) to compare the information provided on Ilyumzhinov's platforms with the facts and figures given on Garry Kasparov's campaign website, Kasparov2014.com. If you really want to get a clearer idea of what these elections are about, you should have a close look at both campaign websites.

Sochi or not Sochi

The World Championship match between Magnus Carlsen and his challenger Vishy Anand also plays a role in the rivalry between Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and Garry Kasparov. Six weeks after the deadline for bids had expired and no bids had been received, the FIDE president announced that the match will be held in Sochi, Russia, this November. No one doubts that the announcement was connected with an earlier meeting between Ilyumzhinov,



Vladimir Putin and Kirsan Ilyumzhinov agreed that Sochi was also a perfect place for a chess match.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and the President of the Russian Chess Federation, Andrei Filatov. Ilyumzhinov has the support of Putin, who expressed his hope that Russia will reclaim its leading role in chess. Although part of the money for the match still has to be raised, Ilyumzhinov mentioned a total budget of three million dollars, with one or one-and-a-half million dollars designated for the prize-fund. As the FIDE rules stipulate a minimum prize-fund of one million euros (1.36 million dollars), this amount must come as a disappointment for the players, who played for a prize-fund about twice this size in Chennai.

Whether the match will really take place in Sochi may depend on the outcome of the FIDE elections. Kasparov has announced that, if elected, he will organize the match with a bigger prize-fund in the United States. The names of his backers cannot be revealed, since they only want to be involved if he runs FIDE. The knowledge of a possible prize-fund that is sizeably bigger must be frustrating for the players if they are pressured to sign a contract for Sochi before the elections on August 14th.

Total Control

Although he is the World Champion, Magnus Carlsen was not consulted about the choice of Sochi. The Norwegian didn't publicly comment on the news, but he must

feel upset that his hopes of playing a match in the US might be dashed, particularly after he had already been forced to play his first match against Anand in India. Yet, if it is going to be Sochi, he may go there without complaining. Carlsen knows how to control his emotions, as can be gleaned from his lack of fear, no matter how tense the situation gets on the board.

We saw a fine demonstration of his 'mental control' during the first free day of Norway Chess, when the players visited a school tournament and some of them were tempted to play Brainball. In Brainball, two players sit opposite each other wearing a headband that registers their brain



A penny for your thoughts. Brainball expert Magnus Carlsen.

activity. The aim is to reduce your brain activity as much as possible, as this will set a little ball moving towards your opponent. Once it reaches your opponent, you win. Of the grandmasters that had a go at Brainball, Aronian and Carlsen were the best at relaxing their brains, but in their direct encounter the World Champion was in a class of his own. The cursor that indicated his mental activity dropped so low that an admiring colleague sighed: 'Incredible. He seems to have total control of his brain.' ■

The tournament is almost held in his honour, but just like last year, Magnus Carlsen fell half a point short of winning Norway Chess. On the World Champion's home turf, Sergey Karjakin miraculously defended his title with one of Carlsen's specialities, a devastating final sprint from a seemingly hopeless position. No Logo Norway Chess 2014 was a chess celebration of the highest level, a super-tournament with tremendous media attention that provided ample proof that chess is marketable. One of the darlings of the press was our reporter **Simen Agdestein**. At 47, the bottom-seed proved against all odds that he can still hold his own against the very best. In fact, he had every reason to grumble about the golden opportunities he missed.

Russian repeats Norway Chess victory with hat trick in last rounds



The direct encounter between Karjakin and Carlsen ended in a draw.

Karjakin Strikes Carlsen Style

T

‘The best players in the world – and me...’ Haven’t I read that somewhere before? Oh, yes. Anish Giri, on a tournament he took part in. In this magazine. A great writer and a modest person in his articles. In this account of

Norway Chess 2014, I’m the one to use his words. This time Giri surely could be categorized among the very best, as he was number 14 in the world when he was invited. Basically, of the top stars only Vishy Anand and Hikaru Nakamura were missing in Stavanger. Anand had commitments elsewhere and Nakamura preferred to focus on the World Rapid and Blitz in Dubai that started immediately after Norway Chess. Still the field was impressive. The organizers had the ambition, nothing more nothing less, to create the strongest tournament in the world. Ever! There was only one person dragging down the average rating. And that was me.

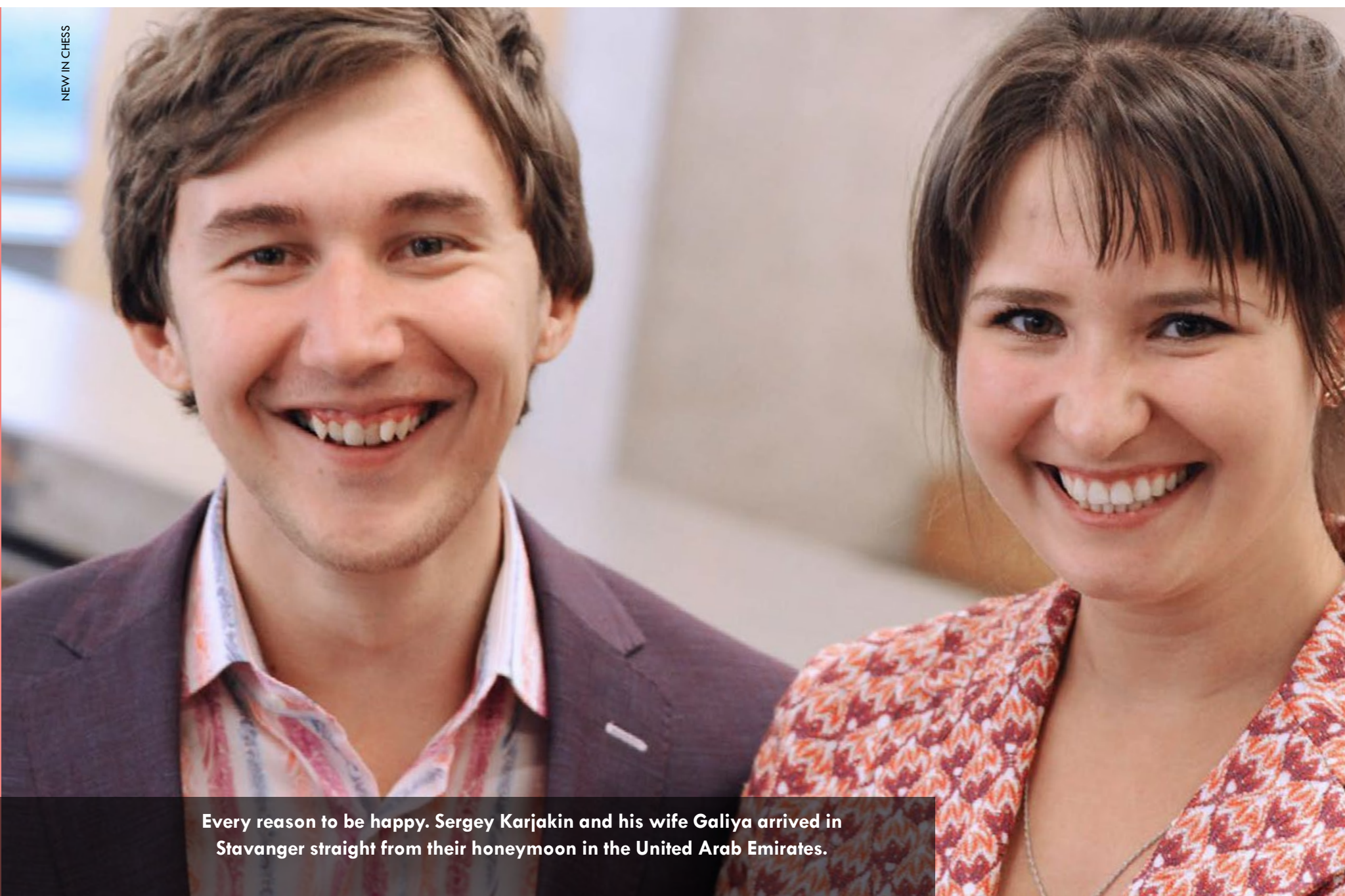
Magnus Carlsen has turned Norway upside down. Chess has become perhaps the most popular sport in the

country. Despite the fact that it’s not even considered a sport here. The chess federation is not a member of the national sports body and I hope they never will be. Chess is surely a sport, but it’s so much more. Do we really want to ally ourselves with such ‘primitive’ activities as soccer or, even worse, skiing?

The Norwegian people have discovered our royal game anyway, and it’s become a big TV-hit.

The big breakthrough came during the World Championship match in Chennai. The state sponsored TV-channel NRK had bought the rights, and watching two people sitting and thinking was a gigantic success.

During Norway Chess VG, the biggest newspaper in Norway, also presented the moves live on their website. ‘Chess is big business for us’, said



Every reason to be happy. Sergey Karjakin and his wife Galiya arrived in Stavanger straight from their honeymoon in the United Arab Emirates.

the programme leader of the broadcast from Stavanger. 'Smart is the new sexy' could be read on T-shirts all over the place when VG organized a match between Magnus and 'Norway' a while ago.

TV2, Norway's biggest commercial TV channel, has also entered the scene and secured the rights for this year's Norway Chess. Last April, they not only showed all of Magnus's games at the Vugar Gashimov Memorial in Azerbaijan, but also the games of the Norway Chess qualifier between Jon Ludvig Hammer and me. Just like last year, the organizers had decided that besides Magnus there should be a second Norwegian participant. We played six rapid games, and had to wait till Magnus had finished his game in Shamkir before we could start, so that they could cover everything. That meant chess live on TV for as much as seven to eight hours on both that Saturday and Sunday, and about five hours the remaining days, when there were only Magnus's games from Azerbaijan to follow.

I won the match 3½-1½, but I'm not sure I won the biggest prize. The

loser was offered a job as commentator on TV2, which was much better paid than playing and surely much less tiring. So when I asked Jon Ludvig if he wanted to have the spot in the tournament, his decision was easy: 'If I can't even beat you, then I have nothing to do there.'

Jon Ludvig is obviously the Norwegian with the potential to rise over 2700 and perhaps go even further. He is 24 years old and has been working full time on chess lately, particularly last autumn as a second for Magnus. However, suddenly I was the one to play the very best in the world, at the age of 47. I had played this kind of tournament more than 25 years ago and realized at the time that it wasn't that much fun. It was hard and lonely work, whereas I would rather drift towards a much more pleasing social life with soccer and studies.

For the last 16 years, which in fact

'But now I was to enter the ring with Mike Tyson, and not just for one round but for nine.'

means my whole working career, I've worked as a chess coach, and my main occupation has been to try to make others good. That's not an easy task, I can tell you, but it's a pleasant and rewarding one. My life as a gladiator was long gone. I thought. And hoped. But now I was to enter the ring with Mike Tyson, and not

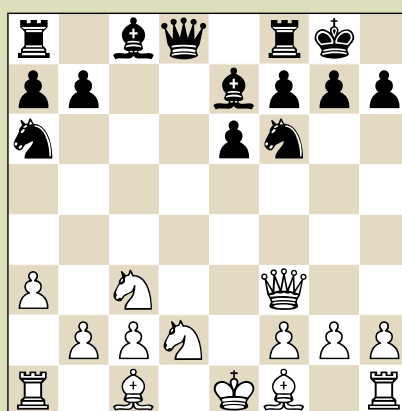
just for one round but for nine.

Village boy

'Confidence is everything,' Jon Ludvig said after last year's edition, shaken as he was after scoring only 1½ points. I could easily see a total catastrophe happen to me as well. I now know the feeling when your energy level is below zero and the brain simply doesn't work. In my 'previous life' as a top player I knew nothing about such things. I started my first Wijk aan Zee tournament in 1988 with

Blitzing for position

Just like last year the drawing of lots for Norway Chess was a blitz tournament on the eve of the first round. On the paradisaal flower island Flor & Fjaere, Magnus Carlsen further boosted the optimism and expectations of his fans. Playing freely and happily improvising the World Champion looked untouchable, extricating himself from more than one dubious position and scoring heavily. The easy win left him beaming, as he knew that he had done some psychological damage as well. His biggest victim was Fabiano Caruana, who once again proved that he needs to warm up to play proper blitz. (Carlsen-Caruana: 1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.♘gf3 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.exd5 ♔xd5 7.♘b5 ♘a6 8.♘c3 ♔d8 9.a3 ♘e7 10.♔f3 0-0



That drops a piece: 11.♔xa6 1-0)

As a result Magnus Carlsen obtained the right to choose his number and as has become practice he opted for number 5, leaving number 1 for runner-up Levon Aronian.

The logic is as follows: number 1 gives you two Whites in the first two rounds, but you finish with a Black game. Number 5 alternates colours perfectly, while you start and finish with a White game.

Final standings blitz

1	Magnus Carlsen	7½
2	Levon Aronian	6½
3	Sergey Karjakin	5½
4	Alexander Grischuk	5½
5	Peter Svidler	5
6	Anish Giri	4½
7	Vladimir Kramnik	3½
8	Fabiano Caruana	3½
9	Veselin Topalov	2
10	Simen Agdestein	1½

two losses and I had a lost position against Anatoly Karpov in Round 3. But I managed a draw and eventually came shared third in the tournament behind Karpov and Ulf Andersson. I didn't know what a catastrophe was and the thought didn't even enter my mind.

Compared to the seriousness of the others, I was 'a village boy', with no chess schooling, but my confidence was good. I was number 16 in the world at my peak at about 22 years of age, and had no doubt that I could become the very best if I just trained half as much as the others. Whether that was true or not didn't matter. Just having this idea made me get much further than I would have with a more 'realistic' approach. 'Shoot for the stars and you will reach the moon!'

I've learned a couple of 'tricks' from a couple of fantastic soccer trainers who performed miracles with their words. It's possible to talk someone good. To a certain extent, of course. We're talking about the last milliseconds, so to speak. I try to convey these wise words to my students. Actually, just before this tournament I had given a speech on this theme to people from Nasdaq at the annual conference of the Nordic branch of the New York stock exchange in Palma de Mallorca. So I came well prepared mentally, with my mind filled up with my own words of 'positive thinking'!

25 Years of idleness

However, it takes more than working on your confidence to play at the highest level. The first thing I thought when, after some hesitation, I accepted the challenge was that I needed a second. All the other players were having helpers, perhaps even more than one. It was unfair enough already that I hadn't played such a tournament for so long. There was no need to play with even more handicaps.

Evgeny Romanov hails from St. Petersburg and is only 24 years old. Rated 2652, he's one of those many

extremely strong Russians that are easily overlooked. Romanov had been in Norway for a while, training our most talented youngsters, and they confirmed that he was 'a good guy'. I think he saw it as quite a challenge to prepare me for players like Aroonian and Kramnik. We worked a bit on Skype before the tournament and worked extremely hard during the event. He made sure I could go to sleep without worrying about what to play the next day. Sometimes he worked the whole night to prepare something. I gave hints of what I wanted to play, but he made sure I was prepared for 'anything that might happen'.

I had told myself that I wouldn't trust anything. It would be me sitting there with the positions and of course I had to take the responsibility to check things. I made the decision to go for the French against 1.e4, but apart from that I was basically following Romanov's advice. I came well prepared to almost every game and managed to take away the disadvantage of not really having been serious about chess ever. I made up for 25 years of idleness thanks to his fantastic help. I wish someone will help him

the same way one day and that he, too, will be given the chance to play tournaments like this one.

The process is the goal

So I came to the tournament free of fear and with the confidence that my second would fill all my opening holes. My goal was to play 'interesting chess', as I had to repeat over and over again to the journalists. 'The process is the goal,' as I'd learned. 'Never focus on the result!' Just focus on every small step, the next one ahead of you, and many perfect small steps will lead to a result. Basic sports psychology.

Nerves, however, are not so easy to control. I hated it, but my heart simply wouldn't stop hammering at night before the preliminary blitz tournament. I came there with only a few hours of horrible sleep and played accordingly. Magnus was in a wonderful mood that day and won convincingly. We played on Flor & Fjære, a spectacular flower island, and the interest was enormous. It was a great start for the event, but a terrible one for me. I scored only 1½ points, blundering and losing on time in many



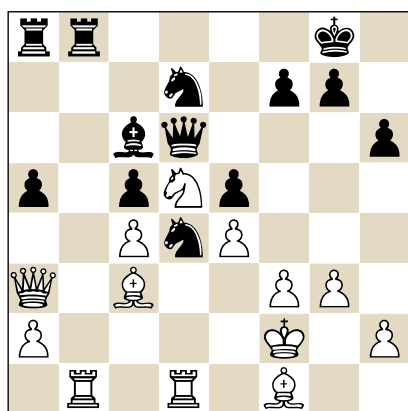
The players' arrival at Flor & Fjære. In the centre local favourites Simen Agdestein (in his Norway Chess sweater) and Magnus Carlsen.



The first press conference at Flor & Fjaere: Aronian, Grischuk, Karjakin, Svidler, Carlsen, Giri, Kramnik, Caruana, Topalov and Agdestein. Having slept only three hours, our reporter barely manages to hide his nervousness.

games. I also had been coughing badly for a month, so much that my ribs were hurting, and I wondered if I had broken one.

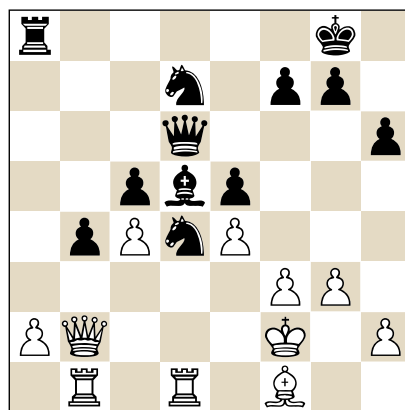
The next night was even worse. My heart kept hammering and I was happy to manage to sleep at least a little bit, perhaps three hours. Levon Aronian with Black was on the agenda. I kept repeating to myself what Sverre Heim, an old Norwegian top player, used to say: 'You don't need to feel well to play well.' As it turned out, I played very well that day. My position was a bit worse after the opening, but I managed to keep the balance and in the end I was even better. The turning point came in the following position:



Aronian-Agdestein
Stavanger 2014 (1)
position after 30. dxc3

30... ♖b4! Without this stroke the black position 'was about to collapse', as Aronian expressed it. It's hard to

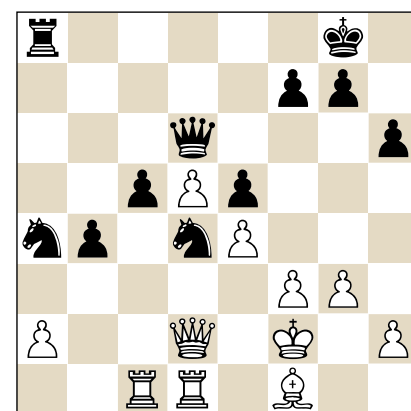
defend all the weaknesses at c5 and d4 and, of course, at a5. But my move seemed to come as a total shock for the number two in the world. **31. ♕xb4?** I thought 31. ♕c1 was best, and then 31... ♖xb1 32. ♕xb1 a4, and the white pressure is gone without the queen on a3. **31... axb4 32. ♕b2 ♕xd5**



My position was about to become excellent and I got a bit excited. **33. cxd5 ♖b6** With the next knight coming to c3, I would at least not be worse, I thought. **34. ♖bc1 ♖a4** I didn't have so much time and was wondering if I was missing my great chance with 34... ♕f6. I saw 35. ♖d3 c4 36. ♖xd4 c3 37. ♕xb4 ♖xa2+ and thought this was the end for White, but imagine my surprise when the computer later showed 38. ♖d2!, with a white advantage. I don't know if Aronian had seen this final move, but it certainly is very important. Considering the situation and the limited time, I thought it best to go for

something I considered to be slightly better for me with no risk of losing.

35. ♕d2



35... ♖c3 This is safe, but perhaps I should have played 35... g5, and it's actually quite difficult for White. In other circumstances, with more time and confidence, I would perhaps have played this, but not now. **36. ♖xc3 bxc3 37. ♕xc3 ♖xa2+ 38. ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 39. ♕xd2 ♕b6 40. ♕c4 g5 41. ♕g2** Here he offered a draw, the first chance to do so since by contract we had agreed on no draws, apart from three-time repetitions, before move 40. I thought I could play on for a while, but after thinking for half an hour I saw nothing. White holds after both 41... ♕b4 42. ♕c1 ♕a4 43. h4! and 41... ♕f8 42. ♕a2, and d5-d6 if necessary. Draw.

The Norwegian audience seemed to be enormously surprised by me and even more so after I drew with Giri

and played the following game against last year's winner in Round 3.

FR 4.4 – C11

Sergey Karjakin

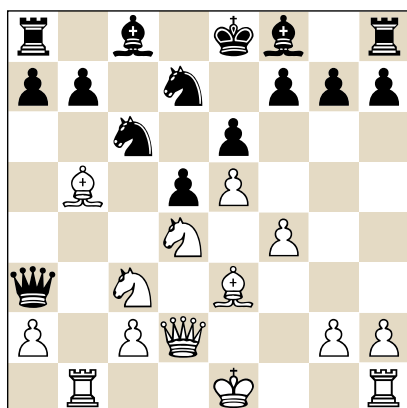
Simen Agdestein

Stavanger 2014 (3)

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5
♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3
cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♙b6!?**

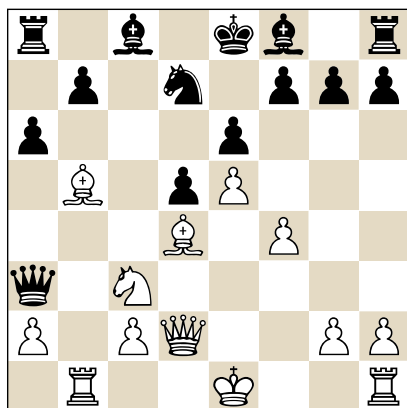
Very much a computer line that has come to the fore lately. The main problem for White is that there aren't many alternatives. Black can continue blitzing out moves for quite a while.

**9.♙d2 ♙xb2 10.♖b1 ♙a3
11.♙b5**



If I had seen this position twenty years ago, I would have worried very much about one of the knights going to b5, but these days it's just a matter of turning on the computer to see that Black has nothing to fear.

11...♘xd4 12.♙xd4 a6

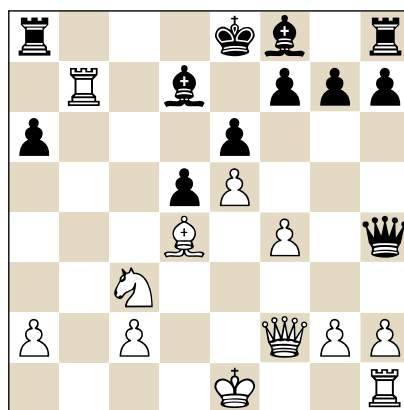


13.♙xd7+

13.♖b3 ♙e7 14.♙a4 b5 15.♙xb5 is also a line that needs to be checked. But simply 14...♙d8 is safe for Black.

**13...♙xd7 14.♖b3 ♙e7 15.♖xb7
♙h4+ 16.♙f2!**

Here comes the novelty. I was wondering when it would come. I played this line against Caruana in the European Club Cup last autumn, so my choice shouldn't come as a complete surprise, I assumed.



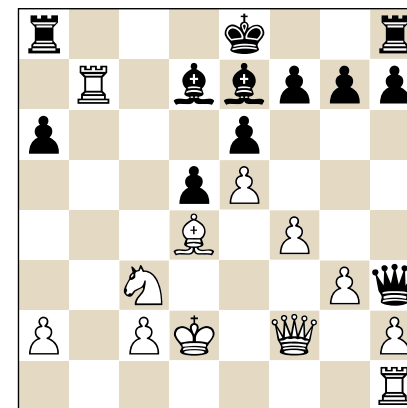
16...♙e7

The whole line is so completely illogical in so many ways that any evaluation of the situation can only be based on concrete variations, but here I actually used my intuition. I didn't see anything seriously wrong with 16...♙xf2+ 17.♙xf2, and now either 17...♖c8, with some ambitions on the c-file, or the passive 17...♙e7 18.♖hb1

♙d8, and Black's position is surprisingly hard to penetrate. But I thought my choice was more interesting.

17.g3 Trading queens now would just give me plenty of extra tempi.

17...♙h3 18.♙d2



18...♙d8 I didn't like 18...♙c8 19.♖xe7+ ♙xe7 20.♙c5+ ♙e8 21.♖b1, and rightly so. I think the Karjakin team had prepared this. I didn't see 21...f6 22.exf6 gxf6 23.f5!, but that may actually be an important line. Black is having a hard time here with the bad coordination of his pieces.

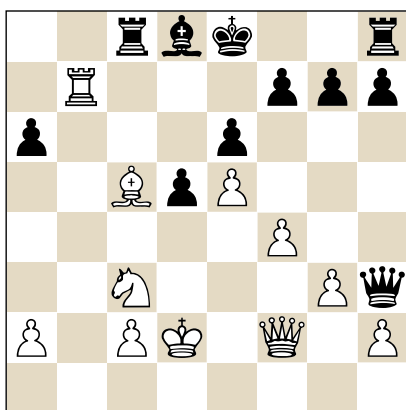
19.♖hb1 ♙c6 20.♙c5

The only way to keep the initiative and the move I had expected.

20...♙xb7 21.♖xb7 ♖c8



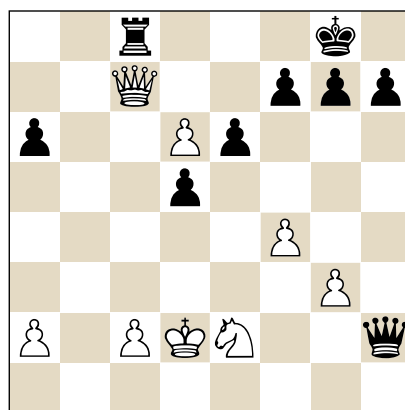
TV2's studio on the first day was quite colourful. Their star commentator (in white shirt) was Hans Olav Lahlum – historian, crime writer, Norwegian celebrity and chess lover.



22. ♖c1 Karjakin finally started thinking, and I was very happy that he did so for quite a while.

22. ♖e4 dxe4 23. ♔d4 ♘c7 seemed safe enough for Black.

More scary seemed 22. ♘d6 ♘a5 23. ♖c1, which in fact gives White a great attack. I thought the emergency line was 22... ♙c6, taking on d6 and then castling, but that loses at once after the impressive line 23. ♙b8 ♙xd6 24. exd6 0-0 25. ♙xd8! ♙xd8 26. ♙b6 ♙xh2+ 27. ♖e2 ♙c8 28. ♙c7!.

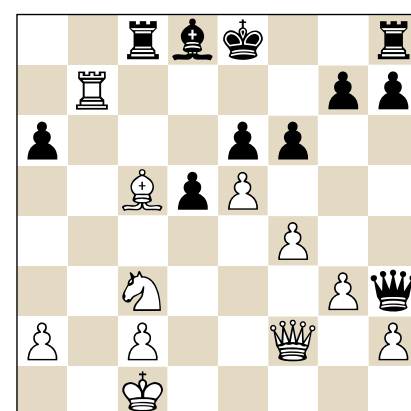


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Great was my surprise when I saw that the computer actually gives Black an advantage after the incredible line 22... h5 23. ♙a7 ♙xh2+ 24. ♖c1 ♙xg3! 25. ♙e7+ ♖f8 26. ♙c7+ ♖g8 27. ♙xc8 ♙xf4+ 28. ♖b1 ♖h7, and White can have his extra piece and he can even win another one with 29. ♙a8, but he will struggle to stop the h-pawn. As I said, this is really a line for computers! It would be impossible for a human to find this. So fortunately Karjakin didn't play 22. ♘d6.

My second said after the game that 22. ♙d4 ♙g2+ 23. ♖c1 ♙f1+ 24. ♖b2 ♙c4 25. ♙xc4 dxc4 26. ♘d6 would give White a tremendous position, but actually there is the very sweet 23... ♙xc5 24. ♙xc5 d4, threatening both the rook and the knight and covering c6 at the same time.

22...f6 I was so happy with this that I didn't look at anything else, and certainly not at what Karjakin played next. The computer says 22... ♙c6, followed by ...f6, something to c7, and my king can walk to safety via f7.



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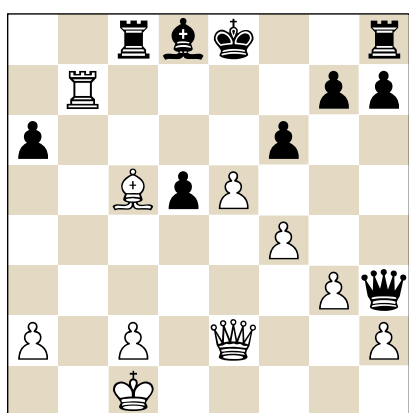


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23. ♖xd5! This came as a total shock.
23...exd5 I had no choice, so this was simple enough. I was still wondering what was going on.

24. ♖e2!

Another shock. I saw 24.exf6 ♖c7 25. ♖e2+ ♔d7 26. ♖xc7+ ♙xc7 27. f7 ♙d6 and wasn't so scared.



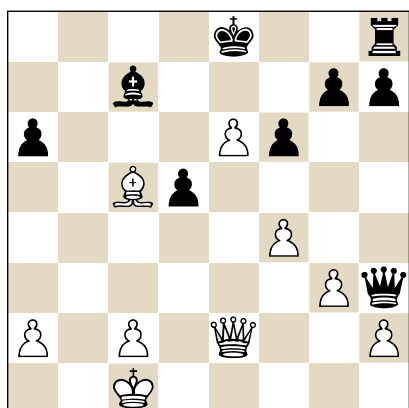
24...♖c7 First I had to check to see if it was really true that 24...♖e6 25. exf6 ♖xe2 26. f7 was mate, but unfortunately it was.

25. ♖xc7

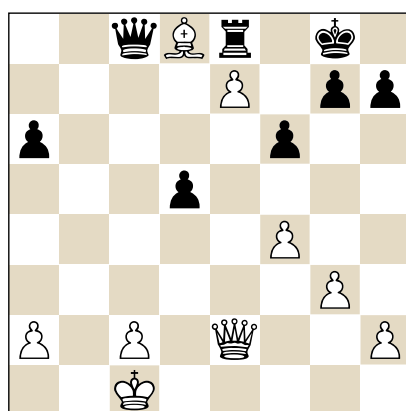
I still didn't understand a thing and was wondering if it was a change of move order.

25...♙xc7 26. e6!

Shocked again! There were almost no pieces left and could it really be crisis? I quickly saw that 26...♙xf4+ 27. gxf4 ♖c3 28. ♖h5+ and 29. ♖xd5 was mate. I don't think I saw that in this line I could actually play 27...d4, and it's a draw by perpetual check after 28. ♖xa6 ♖e3+. But I did see that after 26...♙xf4+ White could calmly play 27. ♖b1, and the situation seemed desperate. The white queen penetrates with enormous force via a6. Fortunately I had a single move that held the balance.



26...♙b6! 27. ♙xb6 0-0 28. e7 ♖e8 29. ♙d8 ♖c8



An interesting turn of events has occurred. I didn't believe I was better, but I wasn't too worried either. He can send his king to a5 and take my a-pawn, but the rook won't be stuck on e8 forever.

30. ♖b2 g6 31. ♖d3 ♖c6 32. ♖c3 ♖b5+ 33. ♖b3 ♖c5 34. a3

If he had returned with 34. ♖c3, I would have gone for repetition. 34. ♖a4 ♔f7 35. ♖xa6 ♖b4+ is also a draw.

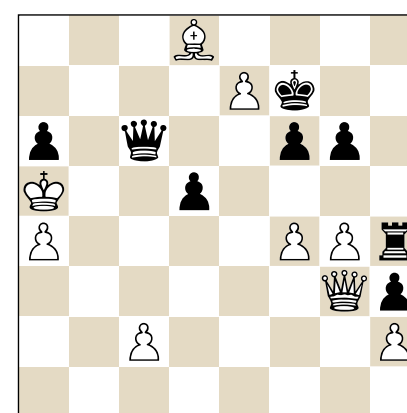
34...♔f7 35. ♖d3 ♖c6 36. ♖b3 h5 37. ♖b4 Karjakin was very upset afterwards that he hadn't played 37. h4, but after 37...♖g8 38. ♖b4 ♖c4+ 39. ♖xc4 dxc4 40. ♖xc4 ♔e8! White would be in

big trouble. 41...g5 is coming and the rook will be wonderfully strong. 40...g5, with the idea of 41. fxe5 fxe5 42. hxe5? ♔e8!, is less precise, as White can play 42. e8 ♖+! ♖xe8 43. ♙xg5 ♖c8+, and it looks like a draw.

37...h4 38. g4 h3 39. ♖a5

Exploiting the fact that 39. ♖xh3 ♖c4+ 40. ♖a5 ♖b5 is mate.

39...♖h8 40. a4 ♖h4 41. ♖g3



Here Karjakin offered a draw, but I thought I ran no risk by playing on a little.

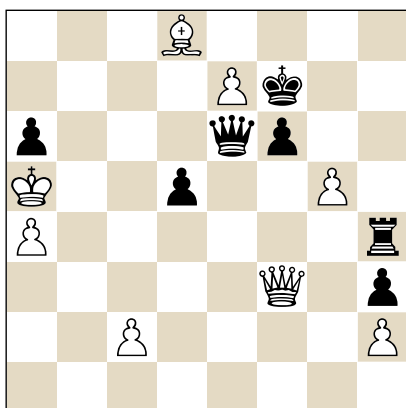
41...g5 42. ♖d3?

I saw I could force a draw after 42. fxe5 ♖c5+ 43. ♖xa6 ♖c6+, and in fact there isn't anything more in the position. The king is very slippery when it runs up towards the corner.

NEW IN CHESS

Joining commentators Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam and Nigel Short on the international broadcast, Norwegian star model and TV personality Linni Meister revealed that she sleeps in a Magnus Carlsen t-shirt with the text 'Smart is the new sexy'.

42...gxf4 43. ♖f5 f3! 44. ♖xf3 ♕e6! 45.g5



45... ♖c6!

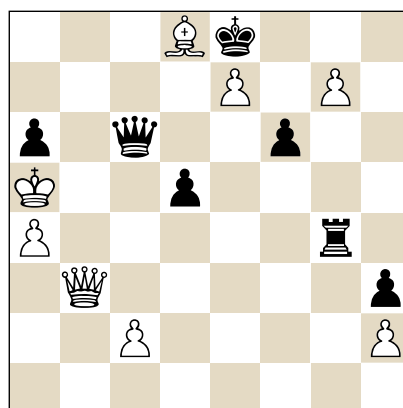
I was very happy with my play around here. Actually I was thinking of Aro-

nian and his tremendous technique in such positions.

46.g6+

Exchanging queens on f6 won't work, as my rook will soon wipe out the pawns on the second rank.

46... ♖e8 47. ♖b3 ♖g4 48.g7

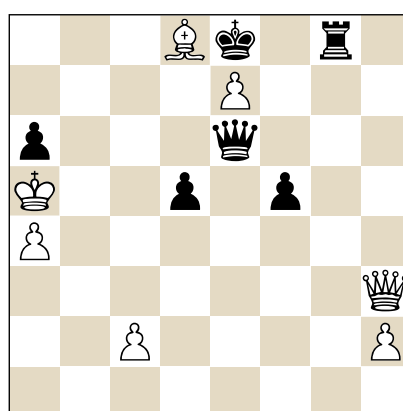


48...f5?

Very stupid. I saw the obvious 48... ♖f7, but somehow I thought my king's position was a bit open after the forced 49.g8 ♖+ ♖xg8 50.e8 ♖+ ♖xe8 51. ♖xf6, but that's just bullshit. After 51... ♖f7 White can resign, as 52. ♖b2 ♖d8+ 53. ♖xa6 ♖g6+ 54. ♖a7 ♖a5+ is just winning the queen and everything. I simply don't know why I played what I played.

49.g8 ♖+ ♖xg8 50. ♖xh3 ♖e6

I already saw when I played 48... f5 that 50... ♖c5+ 51. ♖xa6 ♖g6+ wasn't necessarily leading to mate and realized now that there still was work to be done.



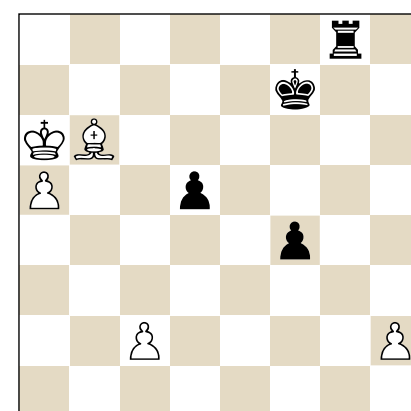
51. ♖b6!?

Karjakin was fighting well.

51... ♖xe7 52. ♖h7+ ♖f7

I had lost control and took a chance.

53. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 54. ♖xa6 f4 55. a5



55...f3??

I had only a few minutes left to the time-control on move 60, but this certainly was the moment to stop and think a little. Then I might have seen that both 55... ♖g2 and 55... ♖e6 were winning. It's not all that simple, but the lines are clear enough, for instance 55... ♖g2 56. ♖b7 ♖xc2 57.a6 ♖xh2, and Black is way ahead on time. 56. ♖b5 ♖xc2 57.a6 ♖xh2 58.a7 ♖h8! 59. ♖c5 ♖e6 is a bit more complicated, but still winning. The simplest is perhaps 55... ♖e6, and after 56. ♖b7 ♖g7+ 57. ♖b8 ♖d6 the king comes to c6 and it's over, and 57. ♖c6 ♖g2 is also winning as in the lines above.

56. ♖b7

Now it's only a draw.

56... ♖g2 57.a6 ♖xc2 58.a7 ♖a2

59.h4 ♖f6 60.h5 ♖g5 61.a8 ♖

♖xa8 62. ♖xa8 ♖xh5 63. ♖b7

Draw.

It annoyed me that I hadn't used my chances, but at least I managed to surprise the Norwegian press corps even more. 'Are you surprised by your result?' they asked, and I could only ask in return: 'Surprised? What do you mean?' At least it seemed I had solved the confidence issue. After a further draw, this time with Kramnik, there followed another 'surprise' or 'upset', depending on how you see it. Alexander Grischuk hoped to repeat what Karjakin had played against me, but this time I played my queen straight to d8 (15... ♖d8). An interesting struggle arose in which the number three in the world first sacrificed one pawn and then another one, but still couldn't really find anything con-

Money matters

The participants of No Logo Norway Chess 2014 received no starting fees. Instead there was a generous prize-fund of € 272,500 (appr. \$370,000).

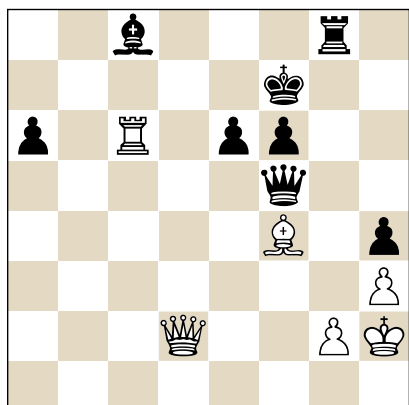
The prize money was distributed as follows:

Place	Prize money
1	€ 100,000
2	€ 60,000
3	€ 40,000
4	€ 25,000
5	€ 15,000
6	€ 10,000
7	€ 7,500
8	€ 6,000
9	€ 5,000
10	€ 4,000

Money prizes were shared between the players with the same number of points.

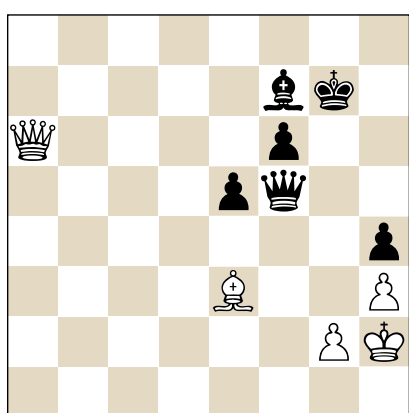
This did not apply to the first prize. In case of a tie for first a blitz match was to decide on the winner, who would take home the € 100,000 first prize.

crete to play. I was happy being two pawns up, with my king about to reach safety, and simply missed the following sweet combination:



Grischuk-Agdestein
Stavanger 2014 (5)
position after 39.♖c6

‘Now it’s over’, Grischuk thought, as he said after the game. 39...♖xg2+! 40.♔xg2 ♕e4+, and taking on c6 is three pawns up, and 40.♕xg2 ♕xf4+ and 41...♙b7 is actually the same. Instead, I went **39...♔g6 40.♖c7 e5 41.♙e3** and now my head began to stop working. **41...♙e6** Natural but stupid. I should have played 41...♕e4!, and White would still struggle. After **42.♕b4** I fortunately found it sensible to secure the draw with **42...♖g7 43.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 44.♕b7+ ♙f7 45.♕xa6**



There are no winning chances here. **45...♕e4 46.♕e2 f5 47.♕f3 ♕xf3 48.gxf3 ♔g6 49.f4 exf4 1/2-1/2**

People were happy for me, it seemed. Holding the first games wasn’t a lucky break. I was actually fighting on the same level as the best, but I



NO LOGO NORWAY CHESS

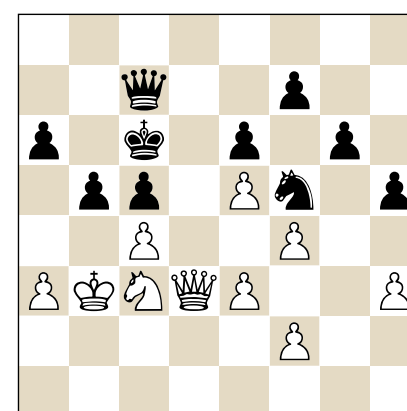
Simen Agdestein and his second Evgeny Romanov.
‘I made up for 25 years of idleness thanks to his fantastic help.’

was unhappy about not converting my chances. In the next game against Caruana I thought I had a fantastic position after the opening. In fact, we both believed that the endgame we soon reached was close to winning for White, but it wasn’t that simple and the game ended in a draw.

After a pleasant draw with black against Svidler I had a wonderful free day and walked up to Pulpit Rock, one of Norway’s most spectacular sights, with Nigel Short and Anemone Kulczak. Short was panting a bit. It’s a four-hour walk and not that hard. A few more of those and Short would sprint to the top. Just like the locals do with their kids. Kulczak could be mistaken for a model, but she was actually the main arbiter, just like last year. On the top you can sit dangling your feet looking down on the fjord 600 metres below. Last year, only Svidler and his second made this tour. Next time everyone should. Whether it was good for the tournament, however, is debatable. I had played seven draws and felt the pressure dissipating. Perhaps that wasn’t so good, as I actually lost the two final games.

Against Topalov it was a bad combination of misjudging the position and calculating horribly, but the main reason for losing, I think, was my mental mode. I was far too emotional, as I later heard that Topalov had observed after the game. I wanted to win and didn’t see things objectively at all. A bad day.

In the final round I played OK against the World Champion, or my former student, as I see him, but then ‘the cloud’ struck me.

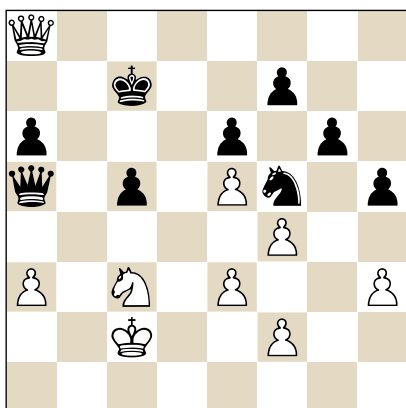


Carlsen-Agdestein
Stavanger 2014 (9)
position after 42.♘c3

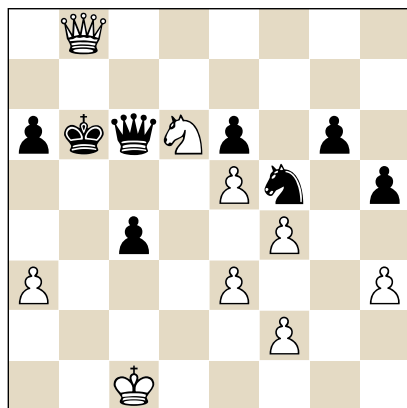
Around here my brain simply stopped working. In hindsight I

know what I should have done. I should have taken a cola and gone for some fresh air. I thought I should avoid 42... ♖a5 43. ♗e4+ ♕c7? 44. cxb5 axb5 45. a4, and I will easily lose a pawn, but 43... ♖b6! would solve the thing. After 44. ♗a8 bxc4+ 45. ♖b2 ♕c7 I have counterplay with ... ♗b6 next. 42... ♗b6 in the diagram position is also a perfectly viable option.

Instead I suddenly played **42... bxc4+?**, and after **43. ♗xc4 ♗b6+ 44. ♕c2 ♗a5 45. ♗e4+ ♕c7 46. ♗a8**



I couldn't take on a3 because of 47. ♖b5+, winning my queen. After **46... c4 47. ♗f8 ♕d7 48. ♖e4 ♗a4+ 49. ♕c1 ♗c6 50. ♗xf7+ ♕c8 51. ♖d6+ ♕d8 52. ♗f8+ ♕c7 53. ♗c8+ ♕b6 54. ♗b8+**

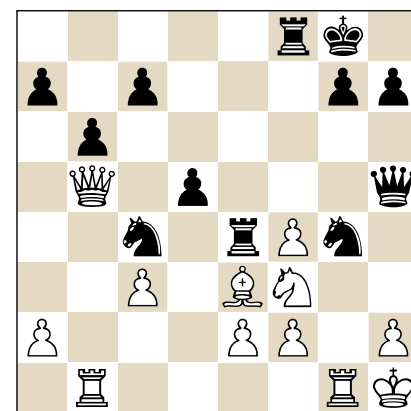


I resigned before getting mated.

I'm not the first to collapse against Magnus, and I surely won't be the last. Magnus's technique is brilliant, and it's no coincidence that people make mistakes against him. This time, however, even Magnus showed that collapsing is

‘Magnus felt the pressure, he said, of the Norwegian press believing it's just a walk in the park winning such a tournament.’

part of a chess player's life. In the following position the computer gives at least 10 options with an enormous black advantage. Magnus found almost the only way not to win the game.

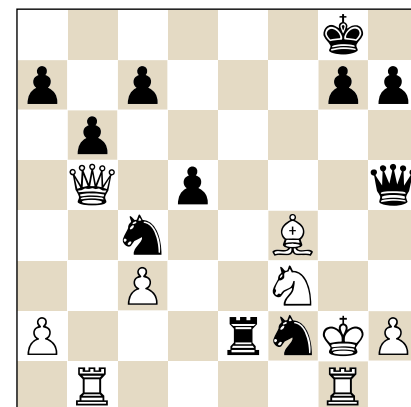


Svidler-Carlsen

Stavanger 2014 (8)

position after 24. ♗b5

24... ♖xf4? In fact, my computer shows 11 moves that give Black an advantage of more than +2.0. **25. ♖xf4 ♖xf2+ 26. ♕g2 ♖xe2**

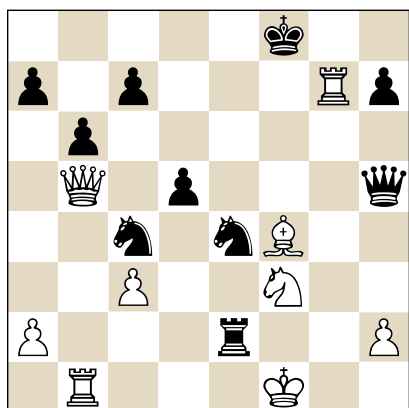


It looks like mate, but White has a fantastic save. **27. ♖f1!** It's unbelievable, but after 27... ♗xf3 28. ♖g3!! White holds. There is nothing better than 28... ♗e4, but after 29. ♗d7 White has just enough counterplay for a draw. **27... ♖e4 28. ♖xg7+!**



A good-humoured Simen Agdestein and World Champion ('or my student, as I see him') Magnus Carlsen at the press conference after their last-round game.

It's still incredible, but White has just enough for a draw. **28...♔f8**



29.♔xe2! It's like a miracle unfolding. **29...♖xc3+ 30.♔f2 ♜xb5 31.♖bg1** And that's the end of the drama. White has saved himself. After a few more moves Magnus had to accept the draw. **31...♜c3 32.♖xc7 ♜e4+ 33.♔e1! ♜c5 33...♖xf3 34.♖h6** is mate. **34.♖c8+ ♔f7 35.♖c7+ ♔f8 36.♖c8+ ♔f7 37.♖c7+ ♔f8** Draw.

Magnus blew his chance to win the tournament here, I guess. In general he didn't look very inspired in Stavanger. He felt the pressure, he said, of the Norwegian press believing it's just a walk in the park winning such a tournament. It certainly isn't, not even for a World Champion. The margins are always small in Magnus's games. It's his miraculous ability to exploit small advantages and win even completely equal positions that has brought him where he is now. He's an expert in turning microscopic advantages into full points. He's been doing that over and over again, and of course it's not random that he's clearly the best in the world at the time. Meeting Garry Kasparov at his peak, however, was monstrously scary compared to playing Magnus. Kasparov would go for your throat right from the start and was satisfied with nothing less than cutting you into pieces. Magnus just tires you down, but even he gets tired, as he said and as we saw against Svidler. Actually, he had only won against Aronian before knocking me out in the last round.



NOTES BY

Anish Giri

NI 27.2 – D38

Magnus Carlsen

Levon Aronian

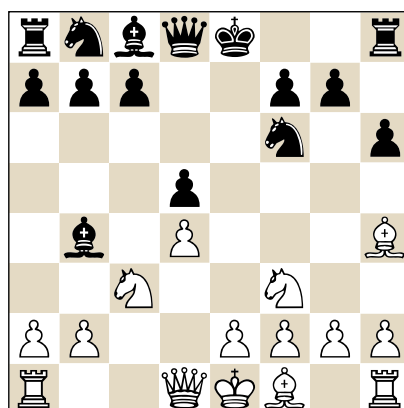
Stavanger 2014 (5)

1.d4 Magnus's repertoire is very broad indeed, but for some reason this doesn't make it impossible to prepare against him.

1...♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♜f3 d5 4.♜c3

♜b4 Lately Levon seems to have done quite some work in the sharp Ragozin Variation, an ambitious opening that often leads to very unbalanced positions. Magnus, by the way, also plays the Ragozin from time to time.

5.cxd5 exd5 6.♖g5 h6 7.♖h4



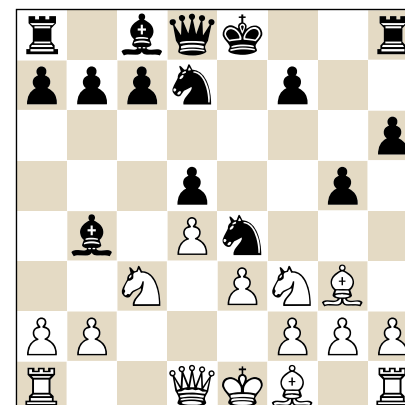
7...♜bd7!? The combination of the moves ...h6 and ...♜bd7 was considered dubious, but Levon follows a rare line, which he re-introduced in the rapid tiebreak against Lysyj, a game he won confidently in the 2013 Tromsø World Cup.

7...g5 is what Aronian went for in his game against Magnus in the blitz tournament that served as the drawing of lots at the start of Norway Chess 2014. The play continued **8.♖g3 ♜e4 9.♜d2 ♜xc3 10.bxc3 ♖xc3 11.♖c1 ♖b2!**, an old forgotten line. Here Magnus took the c7-pawn with the rook, but the main line is **12.♖xc7**. For the classical time-control, though, Levon decided that repeating this adventure would be too risky.

8.e3 8.♖c2 leads to a similar position: **8...g5 9.♖g3 ♜e4 10.♜d2 ♜xc3**

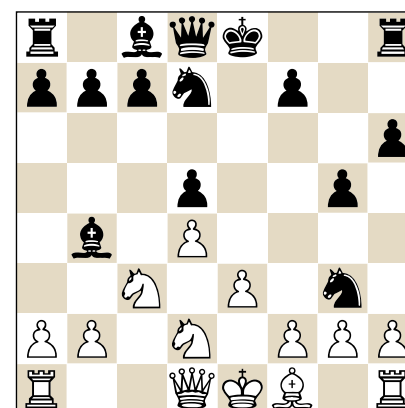
11.hxg3 ♜b6, and the difference between **8.e3** and **8.♖c2** is apparent only to the true experts.

8...g5 9.♖g3 ♜e4



10.♜d2 Faced by Aronian's surprise, Lysyj didn't see the need to move the knight from f3 and went **10.♖c2!?** **♜b6 11.♖d3 ♜xc3**, and here it makes a lot more sense to take with the f-pawn: **12.fxg3!?**. Perhaps this was where Magnus' idea came from. I encountered a similar novelty from the Norwegian in 2011, when he played another one of his friend's interesting ideas, but also in the wrong position.

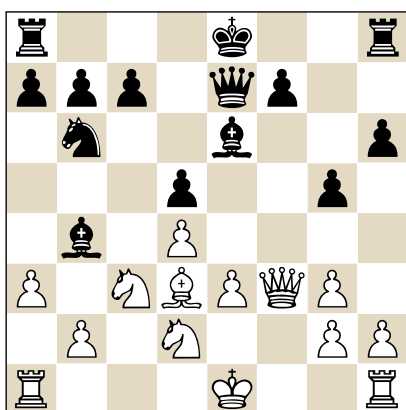
10...♜xc3



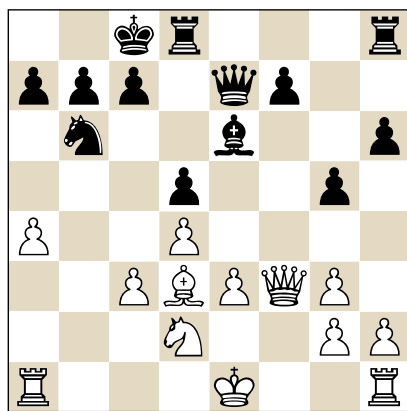
11.fxg3!? One of my favourite childhood quotes, which I read in the annotations to a game Botvinnik played against (if I am not mistaken) Bronstein, was the comment to the very anti-positional move **a3?!**, played in the g3 King's Indian in reply to ...a5-a4. I remember exactly how it went: 'Had an amateur played this move, everyone would smile leniently, but when Botvinnik does it...' The same here. Carlsen knows that he is the boss. Having said that, just like **a3?!** in Botvinnik's game, this move is bad.

More conventional is 11.hxg3 ♖b6 12.a3, when Black has to decide what to do with his bishop: exchange it, pull it back to d6 or perhaps all the way to f8, from where it can be developed to g7. **11...♗b6** Black decides to develop in the usual manner, with ...♗b6 and ...♙e6.

12.♙d3 ♖e7 13.♖f3 ♙e6 13...c6 14.0-0 ♙e6 15.a3 ♙d6 would be an attempt to keep the dark-squared bishop, but Levon plays tempo-chess. **14.a3**



14...♙xc3! 15.bxc3 0-0-0 16.a4 White can't fight for the advantage with the usual means, so Magnus decides to try something else. 16.0-0 would be more restricted and objectively wiser. The position is roughly equal after 16...♗b8 17.e4!?

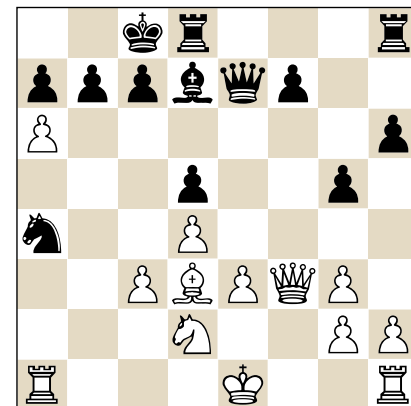


16...♙d7! Typical Aronian play: non-standard and based on fighting for the initiative.

17.a5 17.0-0!? was a good alternative, sacrificing the pawn, but not

ceding the initiative. If Black captures the a4-pawn, White can try to use the momentum with c4!? or e4!?

17...♗a4 18.a6



18...♗he8!?

18...b5 looks nice as well, but Aronian doesn't want to waste any time on the queenside 'nonsense' that White spent three tempi on.

19.♗f2 ♗b8 19...b5!?, once again, deserved attention.

20.♗he1 20...♙g4 was the threat.

20...♙xc3 21.axb7



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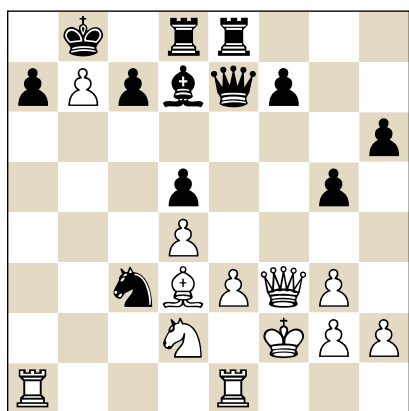


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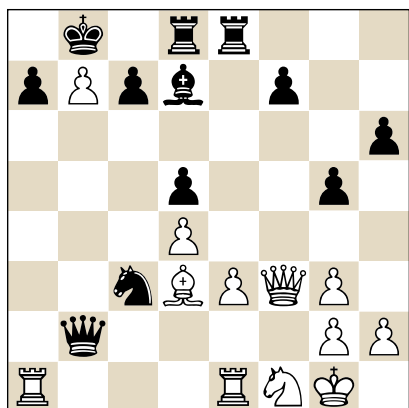
‘After getting into trouble, Magnus starts making very ugly, but very strong moves.’

This is one of those wrongly-coloured pawns protecting the king better than its own! At least, that’s what they teach you in kindergarten.



21...Qb4! The knight on c3 establishes full control of essential squares like b1, d1 and e2, and now the queen joins in as well.

22. Kg1 Qb2! 23. Qf1



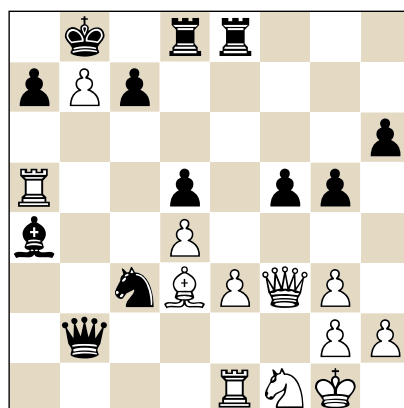
23...f5!

Power play by the Armenian.

24. Ra5 The start of the wrong plan. The rook is in fact misplaced on the fifth rank. 24. Rac1! seems to be better, intending Rxc2 to chase away the annoying queen. Then 24...Qa4! would follow, no doubt, and after 25. Qxf5 Qd6!?, followed by ...Rb6 and an eventual push of the a-pawn, the po-

sition would remain complicated, but the initiative would be with Black, as I see it.

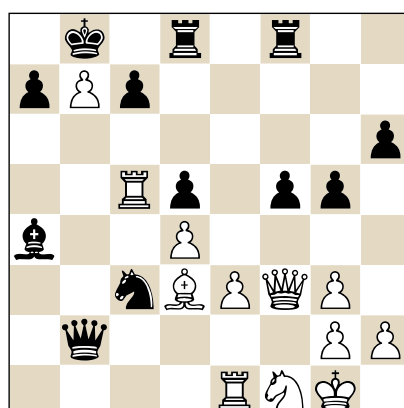
24...Qa4!? Not allowing White to connect his rooks. Here I would get worried as White, but the machine claims the position is still balanced.



25. Rc5? The first real mistake, but obviously the whole game so far had been dictated by Aronian.

Instead, 25. Qf2 was in fact quite good: 25...Qb4 26. Ra6!, and now the machine spits out the following impressive sequence: 26...f4! 27. gxf4 gxf4 28. Qxf4 Qb5 29. Qxb5 Qxb5 30. Qxh6! Qe2+ 31. Kh1 Qxd4! 32. Raa1, and obviously it’s equal...

25...Rf8! Indirectly preventing Qf2. Magnus had probably missed this strong resource.

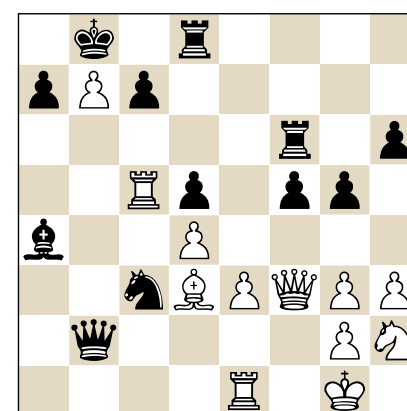


26. h3 After getting into trouble, Magnus starts making very ugly, but very strong moves.

White cannot play 26. Qf2 Qxf2+ 27. Qxf2 Qe4+! 28. Qxe4 fxe4+ 29. Qg1 c6, and Black will be a pawn up. Compared to the game White is not in time to capture the a7-pawn.

26...Rf6 Black is in control.

27. Qh2



27...Rdf8?

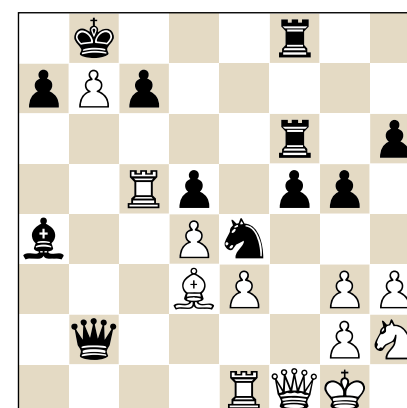
Giving White a chance.

27...Rdd6! was stronger: 28. Qf1 Qe4, and the d-pawn is not hanging: 29. Ra1!?, and now the strongest is 29...f4!, with the idea of 30. gxf4 Rxf4! 31. Qf3 Rxf3! 32. gxf3 Qd2, winning back the exchange and transposing to a winning endgame: 33. Rb1 Qxb1 34. Qxb1 Rxc6!, and Black should win.

28. Qf1!

It’s impressive to see how well Magnus manoeuvres on the two bottom lines with his back against the wall.

28...Qe4



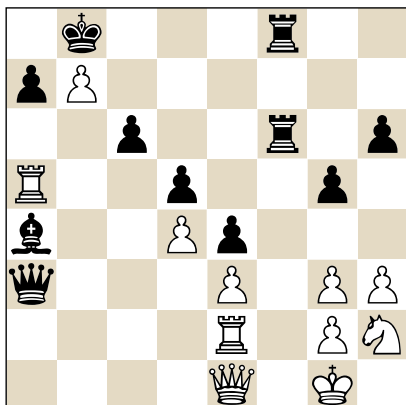
29. Re2?

The position is unpleasant, but a slightly worse endgame was the lesser evil.

Better was 29. Rxd5! Qxg3 30. Qf2 Qxf2+ 31. Qxf2, and White will probably lose the b7-pawn and end up a pawn down, but he should be able to create enough counterplay for a draw: 31...Qc6 32. Re5 Qe4+ 33. Qg1 Qd6 34. Rb1 followed by Qf3. Black’s extra a-pawn is yet to make its first step, while White has easy moves to make.

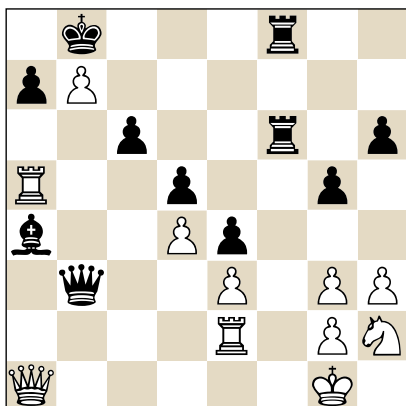
29...Qa3 30. Qxe4 fxe4 31. Qe1 c6 32. Ra5

White has all the dark squares, but his pieces have no room for manoeuvring.



32...♔b3?! The first step into the wrong direction. 32...h5! was simple and strong. Black defends against the potential g4/♘f1-g3 manoeuvre, leaving White with a hopeless position. As Levon admitted after the game, he had missed the idea of g3-g4!.

33.♔a1

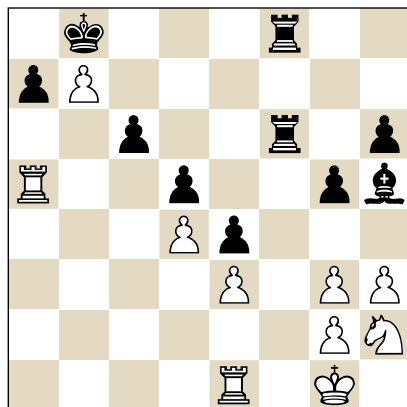


33...♔d1+?? It was still not too late for Black to come to his senses. Now the position turns upside down. The a7-pawn will be lost and the knight will get back into the game.

The simple 33...♘b5 would have maintained Black's dominance: 34.♖e1 (34.♖xa7? doesn't work: 34...♘xe2 35.♖a8+ ♔c7 36.♔a5+ ♔d7, and now even the clever 37.b8♘+ won't help. The king escapes to e6) 34...a6!, and Black is once again in full control. Perhaps Levon didn't have the time or the energy to calculate the consequences of 34.♖xa7, but of course the lines are not so difficult for a calculator of his calibre.

34.♔xd1 ♘xd1 35.♖e1 ♘h5

35...♘b3 36.♘g4! is also bad for Black.



36.g4!

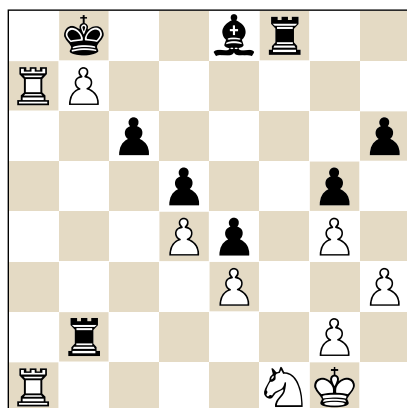
The knight will have a nice future now.

36...♘e8 37.♖ea1 ♖f2?

Looking for some activity, but this only creates extra trouble.

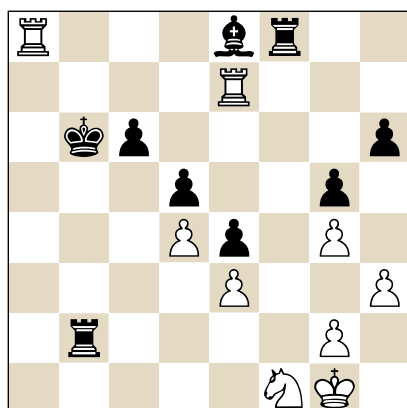
37...♔xb7! would eliminate the pawn without getting into any unnecessary difficulties: 38.♖xa7+ ♔b6 39.♖7a6+ ♔c7 40.♘f1 ♔d6 (40...h5!?) 41.♘g3 ♘d7, and the position should be perfectly defensible for Black, even against the World Champion.

38.♖xa7 ♖b2 39.♘f1!



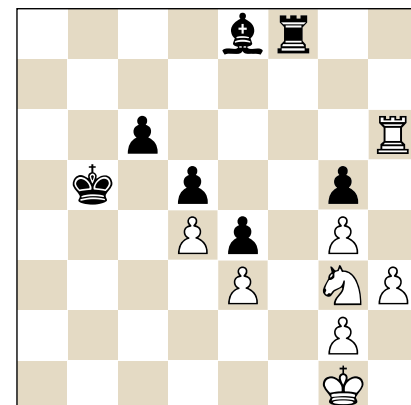
39...♔c7 After 39...♖xb7 40.♖a8+ ♔c7 41.♘g3 is very unpleasant to meet. Black's pieces are pinned and lack coordination.

40.♖a8 ♔xb7 41.♖1a7+ ♔b6 42.♖e7



42...♖bf2 Black saves the bishop, but loses the h6-pawn. Levon must have been kicking himself.

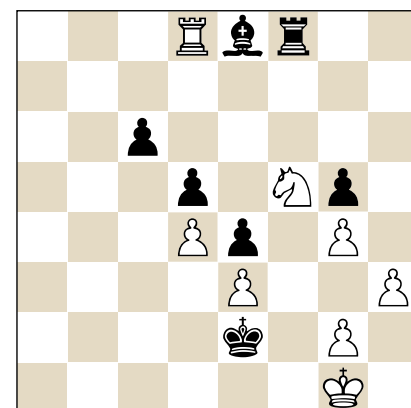
43.♖b8+ ♔a6 44.♘g3 ♘g6 45.♖xf8 ♖xf8 46.♖e6 ♘e8 47.♖xh6 ♔b5



48.♖h7?!

From now on Magnus slowly but surely restricts the activity of the black king and eventually breaks through. Levon's task wasn't easy, but perhaps the loss wasn't unavoidable.

According to the machine, 48.♖d6! is more precise, and while it is not so easy either, it was indeed probably stronger: 48...♔c4 49.♘f5 ♔d3 50.♖d8 ♔e2!, and although the black rook is pinned, White has a hard time making use of this pin:

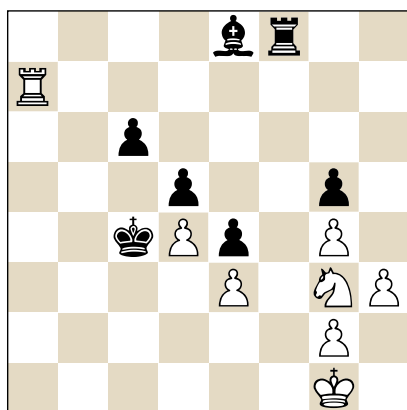


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

51.♔h2! (the key idea) 51...♔f2 52.h4! gxh4 53.♔h3 ♖h8, and now there are two ways to convert, the best one being 54.g5, when after the almost forced sequence 54...♖g8 55.♘h6 ♖xg5 56.♘g4+! ♖xg4 57.♔xg4 Black can still try to resist, but according to my analysis the endgame is quite lost: 57...♔xg2 58.♔xh4! ♘f7 59.♖d7 ♘e6 60.♖d6 ♘f7 61.♖xc6 ♘e8, and now

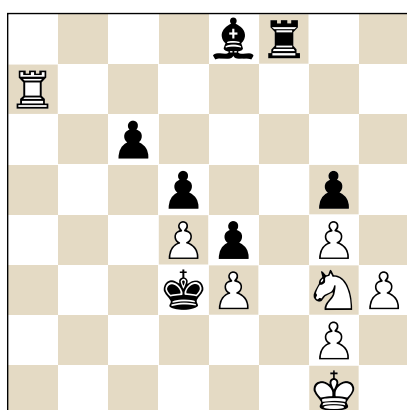
the methodical way, starting with ♖f6, wins and the rough way, starting with ♖d6/c5, wins as well. 54.♖b8 is less clear – after 54...♖f8 55.♖b2+ ♔f1 56.♔xh4 ♕d7 57.♔g5 the position is winning, but probably less so than it looks.

48...♔c4 49.♖a7



49...♕g6? The bishop would be better placed on d7.

49...♔d3! was a good attempt to hold on. The king is quite annoying:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

– 50.♔f1 ♔e2 51.♖a2+ ♔e1 52.♔g3 ♕d7 53.♖e2+ ♔d1 54.♖b2 ♔e1. Here Black cannot claim that he has achieved a draw, but at least it's really hard for White to make progress. And by really hard I mean rea-ally hard.

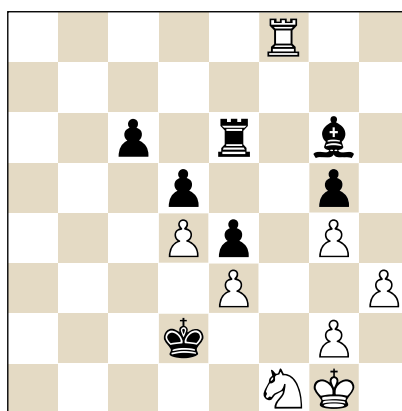
– 50.♔f5 ♕g6 51.♖a3+ ♔d2.

– 50.♖a3+ ♔d2 51.♔f1+ ♔e2 52.♖a2+ ♔e1 53.♔g3 ♕d7 54.♖e2+ ♔d1 and exchanging the rook with the bishop on d7 would lead to a draw.

50.♖a6 ♖f6 51.♖a3 ♔b4 52.♖a1 ♔c3

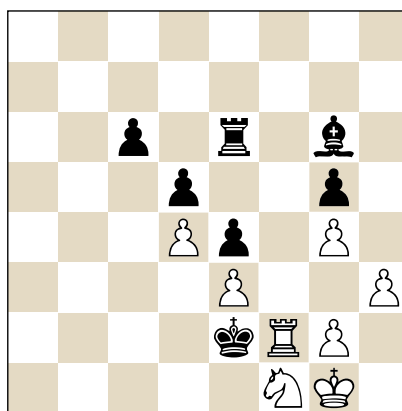
52...c5?! looks counterproductive: 53.dxc5 ♔xc5 54.♖c1+ ♔d6 55.♔e2, and the knight will surely enjoy the d4-square.

53.♖f1 ♖e6 54.♖f8 ♔d2 55.♔f1+



55...♔d3?!

55...♔e2! was more stubborn and although, at first sight, it doesn't seem to change much, it was still worth a try: 56.♖f2+! and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

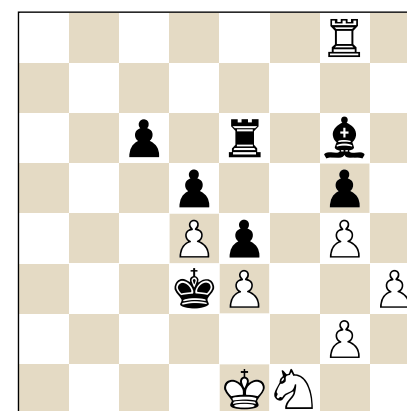
– 56...♔e1 57.♔g3!, followed by ♖e2+ and ♔f1: 57...♖d6 58.♖e2+ ♔d1 59.♔f1 ♖d7 60.♖a2 ♖f7+

61.♖f2 ♖a7 62.♔f5 ♖h7! – this prevents g3-h4, and White still has to show his plan.

– 56...♔d3 57.♖d2+ ♔c3 58.♖a2 ♔d3 59.♔f2! ♖f6+ 60.♔e1!, and the king will gradually be chased away, as the exchange sacrifice doesn't work: 60...♖xf1+ 61.♔xf1 ♔xe3 62.g3! ♔xd4 63.h4 e3 64.h5 ♕d3+ 65.♔e1 c5 66.h6 c4 67.♖a7 c3 68.h7 ♕xh7 69.♖xh7 ♔d3 70.♖c7 d4 71.♖d7, and White wins, thanks to zugzwang: 71...c2 72.♖c7.

56.♔f2 ♖e7 57.♖g8 ♖e6 58.♔e1

Now White can be satisfied with the progress he has made. Slowly but surely, the black king will be pushed further away. The first and most important area has already been conquered (squares e2, e1 and d1).



58...♖f6 59.♖g7 ♖e6 60.♖a7 ♖e8

NO LOGO NORWAY CHESS



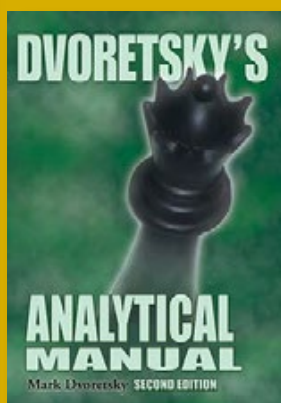
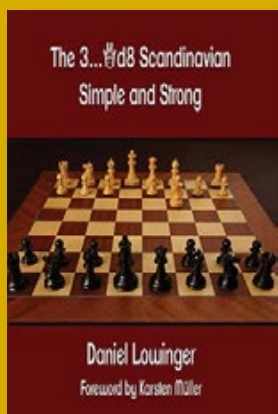
'Typical Aronian play: non-standard and based on fighting for the initiative.' The Armenian had undergone a nose operation before the tournament, which caused him some discomfort.

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**The 3...Qd8
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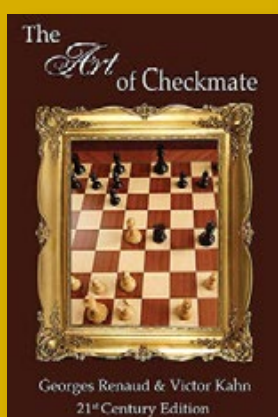
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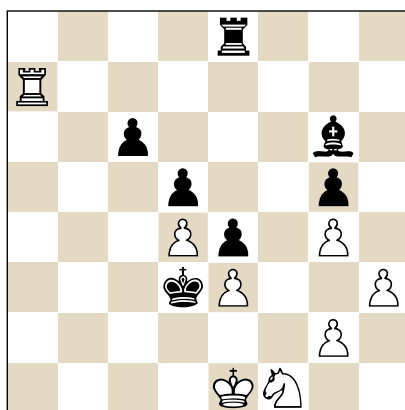
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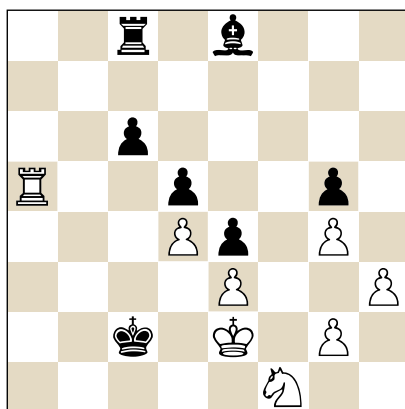
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61. Ra3+!

An important intermediate move. Note how White pushes the king further to the left by means of simple technique.

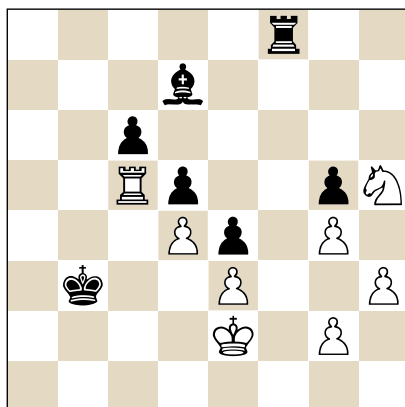
**61...Kc2 62. Ra6 Rc8 63. Ke2
Qe8 64. Ra5**



64...Kc3?!

Aronian's next two moves allow Magnus to implement the Ng3-h5 idea.

**64...Rb8 65. Rc5+ Kb3 66. Ng3 Qd7
67. Nh5 Rf8**

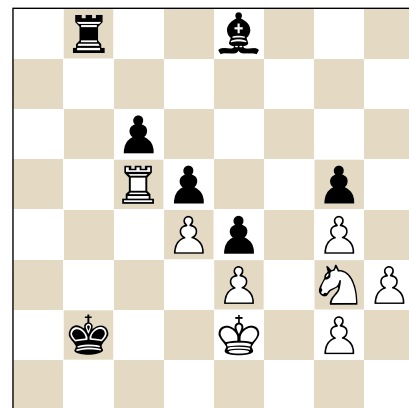


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

would keep the position alive, but with the king pushed away from the e3-pawn, I no longer believe in it. Having said that, once again White would have to show how he plans to make progress!

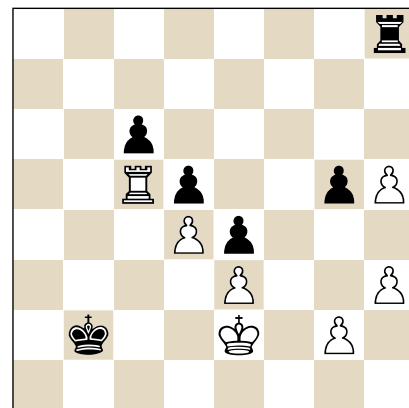
65. Ng3 Rb8?! An unfortunate decision, although all moves seem equally sad. The knight invasion had to be prevented, though. **65...Rc7 66. Rc5+ Kb4 67. Nh5 Rf7** would, once again, avoid immediate disaster.

66. Rc5+ Kb2



67. Nh5! Now suddenly Ng6 is a deadly threat, and the position is lost.

67...Qxh5 68. gxh5 Rh8



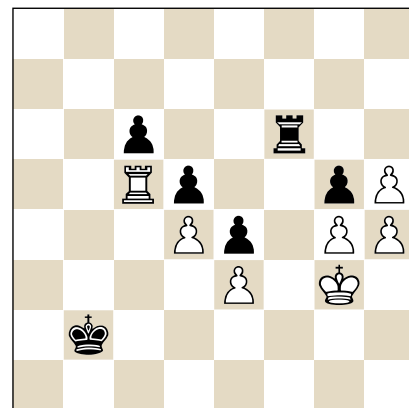
69. g4! Just one of the wins, but the most cold-blooded one. Also winning was **69. Rxc6 Rxb5 70. Qf2 Rh7 71. Rc5 Rf7+ 72. Qg3**, and wins.

69...Rh6 70. Qf2 Re6

70...Rf6+ 71. Qg2 is lost for Black, as h4 will follow.

71. Ng3 Rf6 72. h4

The rest is simple maths.



**72...♖f3+ 73.♔g2 gxh4 74.h6
♜xe3 75.h7 h3+ 76.♔h2 ♜e2+
77.♔xh3**

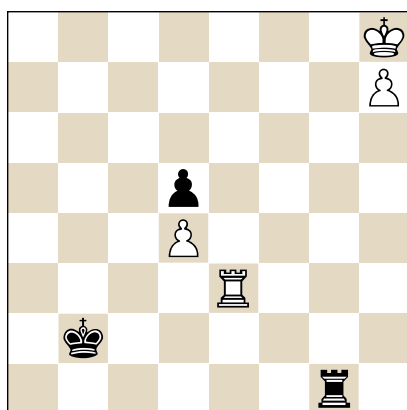
Also easy was 77.♔g3 ♜e3+ 78.♔f2
♜f3+ 79.♔e2 ♜f8 80.♜xc6.

**77...♜e1 78.♔g2 ♜e2+ 79.♔g3
♜e3+ 80.♔h4 ♜e1 81.♔g5 ♜h1
82.♔g6 ♜h4 83.♜xc6 e3**

Or 83...♜xg4+ 84.♔h5 ♜g1 85.♜h6,
and wins.

**84.♜e6 ♜xg4+ 85.♔h5 ♜g1
86.♜xe3 ♜h1+ 87.♔g6 ♜g1+
88.♔f7 ♜h1 89.♔g8 ♜g1+
90.♔h8**

The king shuts itself in the corner, but
only temporarily.



**90...♜g4 91.♜e5 ♜xd4 92.♔g7
♜g4+ 93.♔h6**

Black resigned.

An impressive battle. It's rare to see
both the strong and the weak sides of
the two greatest players of our day so
vividly exposed in one game.



Levon Aronian had undergone a nose
operation before the tournament and
perhaps that affected his play. His win
in the second round against Karjakin
seemed very convincing, but look
what happened in the next round:

EO 56.7 – A18

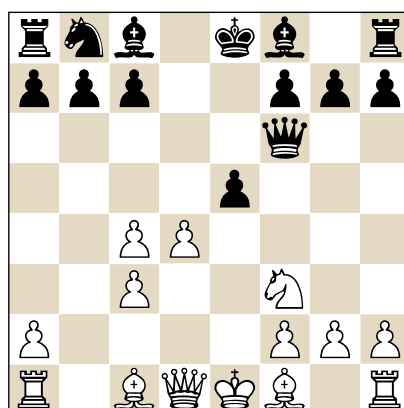
Alexander Grischuk

Levon Aronian

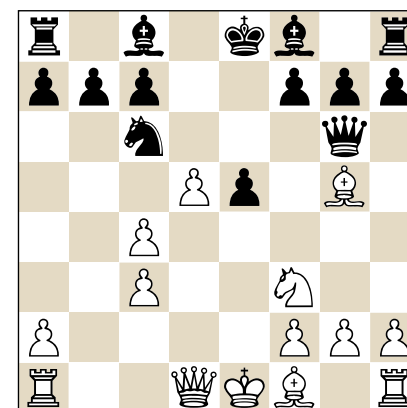
Stavanger 2014 (3)

**1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.e4 d5 4.e5
d4 5.exf6 dxc3 6.bxc3 ♜xf6 7.d4
e5 8.♘f3**

8...♘c6 I remember moving the
pieces on a demonstration board
in an international tournament in
the neighbouring municipality in
1980. I was 13 and admired the play-
ers enormously. Now I discover, to
my big surprise, that the ratings of
these players were only about 2400.
I thought they were huge stars. But
there I learned the cool line 8...exd4
9.♘g5 ♜e6+ 10.♘e2 d3 11.0-0! 'It's
in Watson,' people said, citing John
Watson's 'Bible' on the English at the
time. Aronian's choice is interesting



and rare and perhaps 'the latest cry' in
this line. **9.♘g5 ♜g6 10.d5**



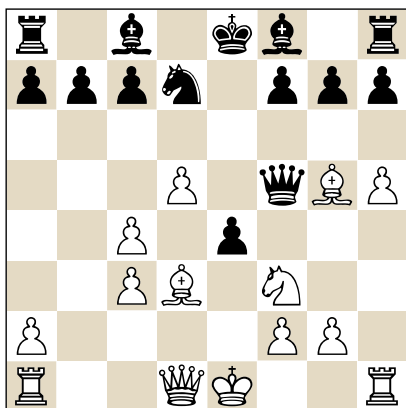
10...♘b8 How to explain this to a be-
ginner? Black goes out with the queen
early and wastes lots of time with his
pieces. But to cite Watson again, this
time from another really brilliant book
of his, *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*,
modern chess is not dogmatic think-
ing. The main thing is what works in
practice. **11.h4 ♘d7** Aronian was
playing very fast, following his home
preparation, he thought. **12.♘d3 e4?**

NEW IN CHESS

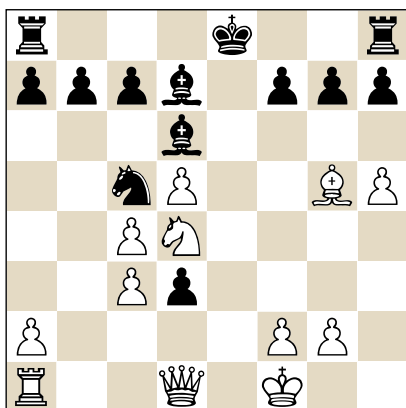


Closely watched by his trainer Vladimir Tukmakov and Levon Aronian, Anish Giri confidently manoeuvres a luxury yacht in the waters around Stavanger.

Played instantly, but it was high time to get the mind started. **13.h5 ♖f5** 13... ♖a6 is half possible, but it certainly wasn't what Aronian had prepared. Now comes a huge surprise.



14. ♖h4! Very special and very nasty. Black is lost already. It was possible to play 14. ♖c2 too, and that's perhaps why Aronian overlooked the cruel rook move. **14...exd3 14...♗c5** 15. ♖xe4 is just bad for Black, so it's already desperation time. **15. ♖f4 ♗c5 16. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 17. ♗d4 ♖d7 18. ♖f1 ♖d6**



19. ♗b3 Grischuk easily destroys Aronian's hopes of a blockade. **19...f6 20. ♖e3 b6 21. ♗xc5 bxc5 22. ♖xd3 0-0 23. ♖d2 ♖e8 24.h6 g5 25. ♖b2!** The queen goes to a3 and then it's over. **25...♖d7 26. ♖a3 ♖fe8 27. ♖xc5 ♖h2 28. ♖e1 ♖f5 29. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 30. ♖e3 ♖f7 31. ♖e2 ♖e5 32. ♖d2 ♖g4 33. ♖xa7 ♖g6 34.a4 ♖xh6 35.a5 c6 36.dxc6 ♖c8 37.f3 ♖f5 38.g4 ♖e6 39. ♖e7 ♖xc4 40. ♖d4** 1-0.

In the last round Grischuk emerged as the winner of one of the most dramatic games of Norway Chess 2014.

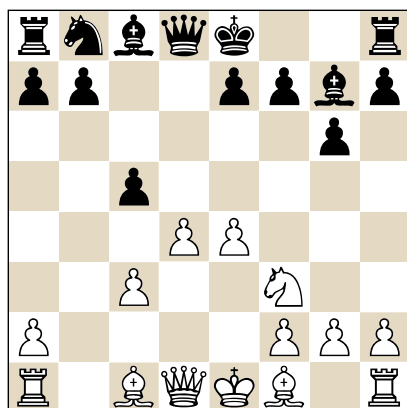


NOTES BY
Anish Giri

GI 4.8 – D85
Vladimir Kramnik
Alexander Grischuk
Stavanger 2014 (9)

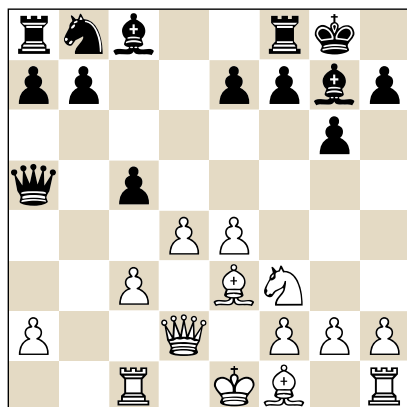
1.d4 Kramnik has played many games against Grischuk in the English Defence, starting with 1. ♗f3 c5 2.c4, but of late Vladimir doesn't shy away from entering the Grünfeld.

1...♗f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.e4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 ♖g7 7. ♗f3 c5



8. ♖e3 Kramnik's pet line, and mine too. I've had quite some games here with both colours against quite a few of the world top, including Kramnik himself.

8... ♖a5 9. ♖d2 0-0 10. ♖c1

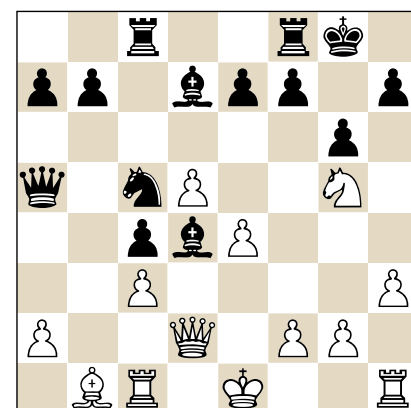


10... ♖g4!? Alexander's last word. He played this rare system against Karjakin earlier in the tournament, so it will not have come as a surprise for Kramnik. On the contrary, I assume Vladimir was hoping for this line to appear on the board.

10... ♖d8 11.d5 e6 12. ♖g5 was a tabiya for a while around 2009/2010, and I even managed to win a game with it as White, against David Howell. However, just when it seemed that the line was trouble for Black, Grischuk came up with 12... ♖d6!? instead of the usual 12... ♖e8 or 12...f6. Now Khenkin remained true to himself and repeated moves with ♖f4- ♖d8- ♖g5 at the 2012 Istanbul Olympiad, but Kramnik probably had something to say about this position, too.

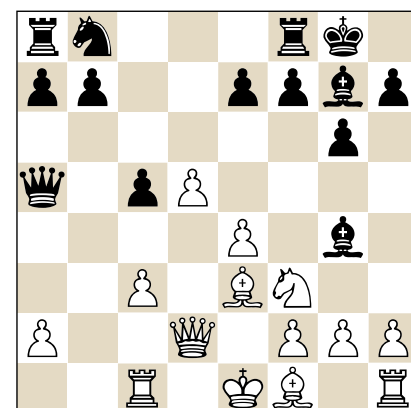
11.d5 The critical test.

Karjakin, who wasn't familiar with this variation, tried 11. ♗g5, but quite quickly found himself in a position that he wasn't pleased with: 11... ♗a6!? 12.h3 ♖d7 13. ♖d3 ♖ac8 14.d5 c4 15. ♖b1 ♗c5 16. ♖d4 ♖xd4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and here the future winner of Norway Chess claimed that he sacrificed an exchange with 17.cxd4?, which ran into 17...c3! (I think it's not shameful to blunder this move ☺) 18. ♖xc3 ♗d3+ 19. ♖xd3 ♖c1+, and eventually White even went on to win the game. 17. ♖xd4 keeps the position level, but Black generally shouldn't be unhappy with the opening.



11...♘d7

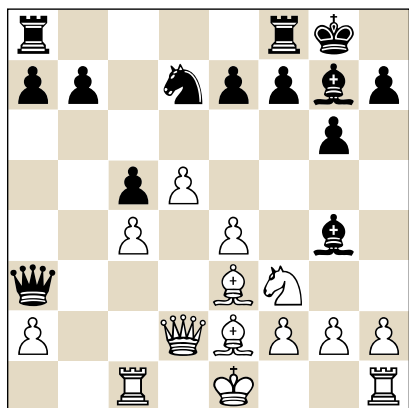
11...♘a6 12.h4! led to a famous victory for White in the game Kramnik-Svidler from the 2009 Tal Memorial.

11...♙xf3 is another major move, but in the ♙e3 line of the Grünfeld, the doubled f-pawns often have more advantages than drawbacks. White's pawn mass in the centre can become quite dangerous in the future.

12.c4 ♖a3 All this had already been played before, although not at the highest level. White has quite some space in the centre, but he has yet to finish his development.

12...♙xd2+ 13.♘xd2 is not good for Black, as the bishop on g4 is suddenly feeling very uncomfortable.

13.♙e2 13.♘g5!? was played in Moradiabadi-Nguyen, 2010.



13...♙xf3!?

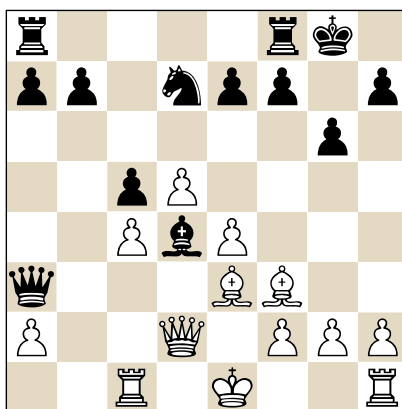
A novelty, and one that was needed. Black really has to start annoying White somehow in order not to end up in a worse position without any trumps of his own.

14.♙xf3

Kramnik was obviously still in his book, no doubt about it, but the other capture was an option too.

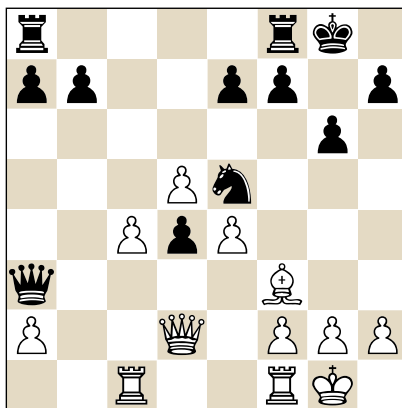
As for 14.gxf3!?, as I said above, the doubling of the f-pawns can often benefit White. Here the idea is that after 14...♙d4 White can just go 15.0-0, and the central pawn mass after 15...♙xe3 16.fxe3 looks quite scary. Instead, Black should maybe try 15...e5!?, or even 14...f5!?, trying to undermine White's pawn dominance in the centre.

14...♙d4 The point. Now Black gets some concrete play.



15.♙xd4 cxd4 16.0-0 ♘e5

While watching the game, I also considered 16...e5, trying to get rid of White's strong d5-pawn, but this is too optimistic: 17.dxe6 ♘e5 18.exf7+ ♙xf7 19.♙d1, and there is some compensation for the pawn, but not enough.

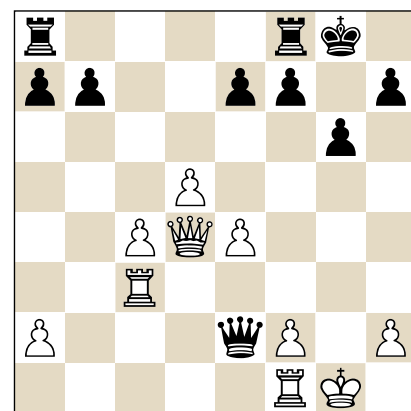


17.♙e2

17.♙e2 is met effectively by 17...d3! 18.♙c3 dxe2! 19.♙xa3 exf1 ♙+ 20.♙xf1 ♘xc4, and Black ends up with two rooks for the queen, which is obviously enough.

17...♘xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♙xf3 19.♙c3 ♙e2

The opening phase is over. The minor pieces have been exchanged and the pawns are equal. Still, thanks to his strong central pawn mass, White has every reason to be satisfied with the outcome of the opening.



20.f4! A strong idea, which was probably prepared by Kramnik and took Grischuk out of his book.

20.c5 ♙xa2 21.♙fc1 was probably what

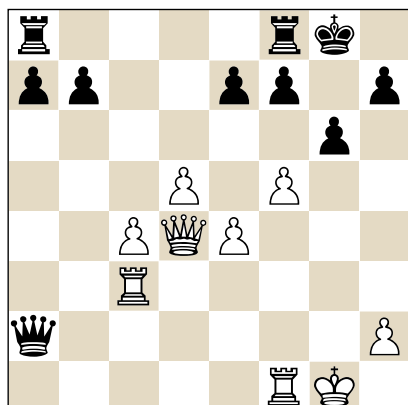
NEW IN CHESS



Although he quite typically claimed that his main focus had been on the blitz tournament, Alexander Grischuk contributed heavily to the entertainment in the main event.

Grischuk was hoping for. Then the c-pawn is quite strong, but Alexander had surely figured out how to stop it.

20... ♖xa2 21.f5



21...b6! Grischuk keeps his cool and makes a very useful positional move. The pawn mass, though scary, isn't crashing through yet.

21...a5? would be a nervous attempt to create some counterplay, but it loses by force: 22.d6! exd6 23.♖e3!. The threat of f6, followed by ♖h6, is deadly and 23...f6 doesn't help: 24.fxg6 hxg6 25.♖h6 ♔f7 26.e5! dxe5 27.♖cf3 (White wins by force) 27...♖a6 28.♖h7+ ♔e8 29.♖d1 ♖f7 30.♖g8+ ♖f8 31.♖d5, and mate is coming soon.

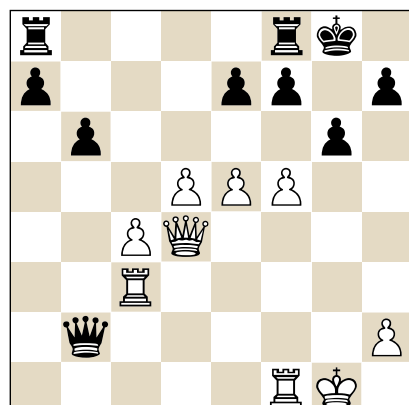
22.e5 Pushing all of them forward! Must have felt good.

22.d6 doesn't win here: 22...exd6 23.♖e3 ♖a5! (23...f6 doesn't lose

either: 24.fxg6 ♖a5! 25.♖f5 ♖a1+ 26.♖c1 ♖a4, and the queen comes to the rescue) 24.♖h6 ♖xc3 25.f6 ♖d4+, and the black king finds itself in a mating net, but unfortunately White can't escape perpetual check himself.

22... ♖b2!

Another wise decision. The black queen joins the action from the rear.



23.♔h1!

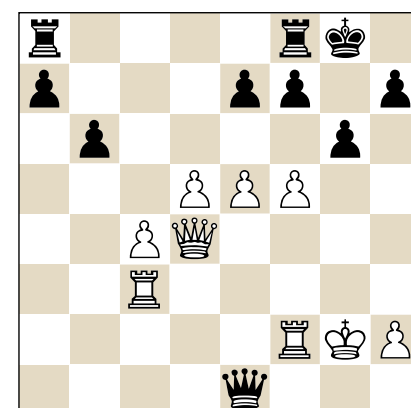
Piling up threats, as an immediate breakthrough would be premature.

23.♖e3 looks tempting, as it prepares f6, but after 23...gxf5! Black holds his own: 24.♖b3 ♖c2 25.♖g5+ ♔h8 26.♖g3 ♖g8 27.♖xe7 ♖g6!, and soon the white king will feel quite weak, too: 28.♖xg6 hxg6 29.♖xf7 ♖e4, and here White has an impressive pawn mass, but Black will give a perpetual. 23.f6 is way too premature: 23...exf6 24.exf6 ♖fe8, and the defence is sim-

ple: 25.♖f4? ♖xc3 26.♖h6 ♖e3+, and White can resign.

23... ♖e2 Another decent move is 23...♖ac8!?, as in the potential complications the rook will join the play. There is no way for White to break through by force: 24.♖e3 (24.♖g1 ♖e2) 24...♔h8 25.f6 exf6 26.exf6 ♖g8, and there is compensation for the pawn, but no mate.

24.♖f2 ♖e1+ 25.♔g2



25... ♖ac8!

An amateur might ask in what variation the rook will prove useful here, but a strong grandmaster doesn't need concrete justification for such a move. It is clearly the most useful move in the position.

26.♖f1 ♖e2+ 27.♖f2 ♖e1

The game was heading for a draw here, and as Grischuk said afterwards, Kramnik's body language suggested



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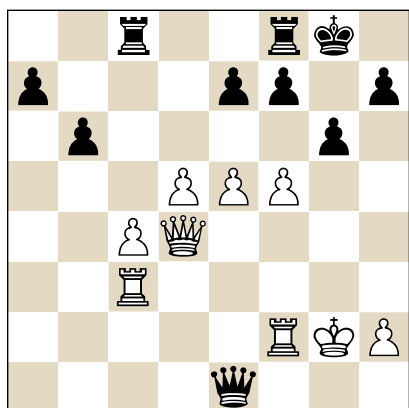
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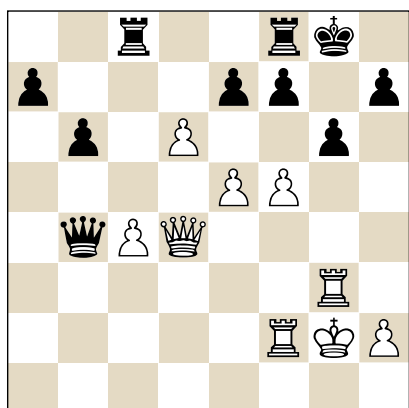
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move repetition. But suddenly Big Vlad decided to give it another shot.



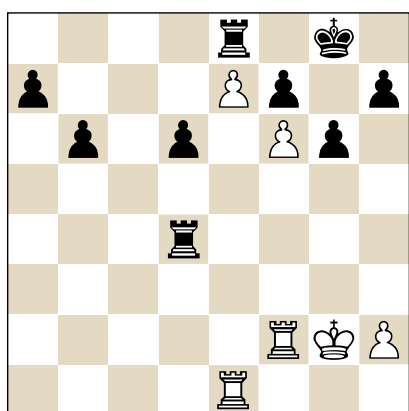
28. ♖g3!? Now that the entire white army is looking at the black king, everything is ready for a breakthrough.

28... ♖b4 28... ♖c1!? was another way to create counterplay: 29. ♖g4 b5! 30. cxb5 ♖c2. **29. d6!** It's time.



29... ♖xc4

29...exd6 wouldn't be good: 30. e6! ♖e1!? (the machine comes up with a sick defence, which fortunately doesn't work) 31. ♖e3 ♖xc4 – the point of the defence, but now suddenly White shifts his focus from attack to positional gain: 32. ♖xe1 ♖xd4 33. e7 ♖e8 34. f6!,

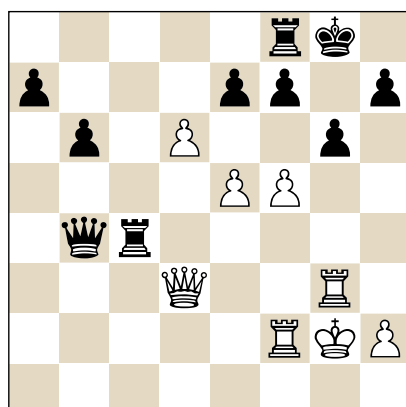


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

‘As Grischuk said afterwards, Kramnik’s body language suggested move repetition. But suddenly Big Vlad decided to give it another shot.’

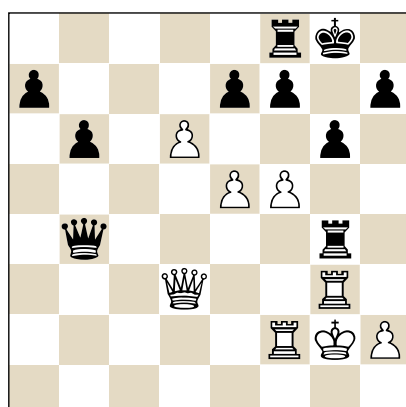
and the e7-pawn, supported by another nail on f6, is worth more than the three pawns. Black is lost.

30. ♖d3



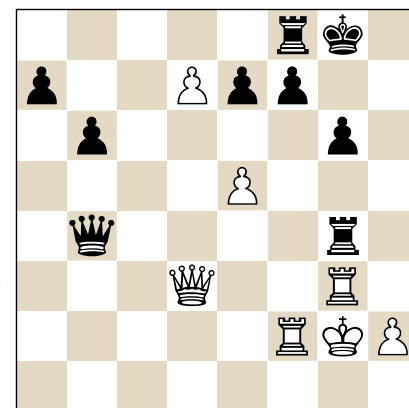
30... ♖g4? Playing with fire. I am not sure whether Grischuk saw that 30... ♖d4 gives him a draw, or whether he just missed the 31. fxf6! idea and was playing for more.

After 30... ♖d4! 31. ♖c2! (31. ♖f3 ♖d2! is essential, but also winning), 31... ♖c4!? would force move repetition: 32. ♖d3 ♖d4, etc.



31. d7? The most natural move, trying to deflect the rook and use the x-ray on the f-file. But that same x-ray will prove fatal for White!

Necessary and strong was 31. fxf6!, as on the next move there will no longer be time to capture on g6: 31... hxf6 32. d7, and now:



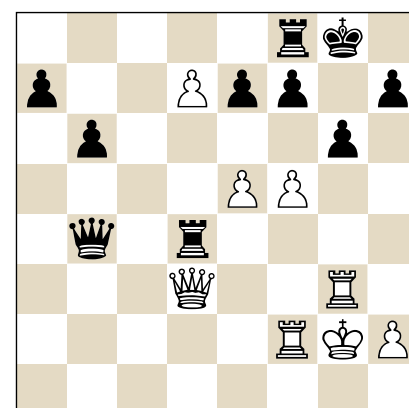
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

– 32... ♖g7! (the best chance) 33. d8 ♖xd8 34. ♖xd8 ♖e4+ 35. ♖f3 ♖e2+ 36. ♖h3 ♖xg3+ 37. ♖xg3 ♖xe5+ 38. ♖g2 ♖e2+ 39. ♖f2 ♖e4+ 40. ♖f1, and White will avoid the perpetual, but converting the extra rook will still be quite troublesome. There are many pawns and checks!

– 32... ♖d4 33. ♖xg6+! (the key move) 33... ♖h7 34. d8 ♖! and everything is hanging, but suddenly the f7-pawn feels uncomfortable: 34... ♖dxd8 (34... ♖fxd8 35. ♖xf7+) 35. ♖d6+!, and mate to follow soon;

– 32... ♖e4+ loses trivially to 33. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 34. ♖d3 ♖d8 35. ♖c2.

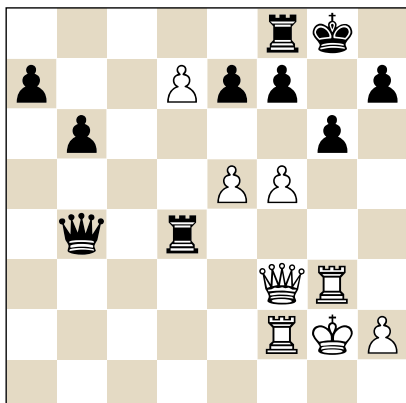
31... ♖d4



32. ♖f3?? So far, everything had been going according to plan. The d7-pawn is taboo, but suddenly there came a shocker.

If Kramnik had seen what was awaiting him, he would have gone for half a point with 32. fxf6! ♖xd3 33. gxf7++ ♖h8 34. ♖xd3 ♖g4+ 35. ♖f1 ♖c4

36. ♖f3 ♔g7 37. ♕g2 or 32. ♖c2 ♕b5 33. fxg6 ♖d5+ 34. ♕f1! ♖xd7 35. gxf7++ ♔h8 36. ♖b3.



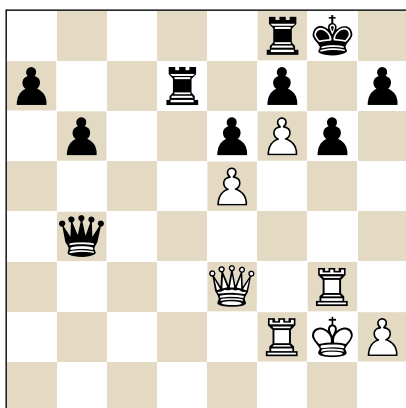
32...e6!!

All of a sudden the f8-rook is fully protected and the position turns out to be dead lost for White. There is simply nothing he can do!

33.f6

After 33.fxe6 fxe6 the protected rook on f8 reveals the point behind Black's last move.

33...♖xd7 34. ♖e3



34...♖fd8!

The easiest and most efficient way to protect against the mate. The position is absolutely hopeless for White.

35. ♖h6 ♖f8 36. ♖g5 h6 37. ♖e3 ♔h7 38. ♖h3 h5 39. ♖g3 ♖h6 40. ♖g5 ♖d3

White resigned.

An exciting last-round struggle between the outstanding Russians in which Grischuk's nerves proved stronger.



The most amazing opening preparation in the tournament was definitely Caruana's against poor Svidler.



NOTES BY

Fabiano Caruana

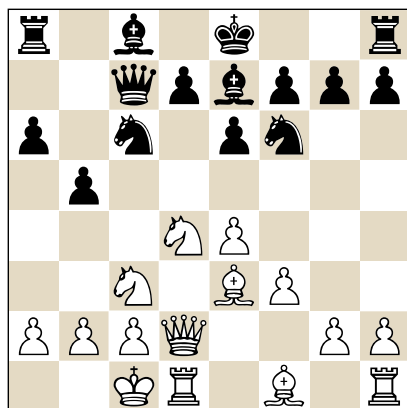
SI 40.2 – B48

Fabiano Caruana

Peter Svidler

Stavanger 2014 (2)

1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘c6 5. ♘c3 ♖c7 6. ♗e3 a6 7. ♖d2 ♘f6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.f3 b5

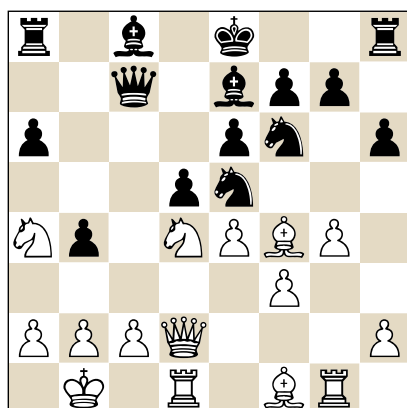


A very topical variation of the Taimanov. Peter already played it against me last year at the European Club Cup in Rhodes. In that game, I chose 10.g4 and achieved a promising position from the opening. Peter certainly had an improvement in mind there, so I decided to deviate first.

10. ♕b1 Why do I delay playing g4? I'm not quite sure... It seems the main hope is that my opponent will be as confused as I am.

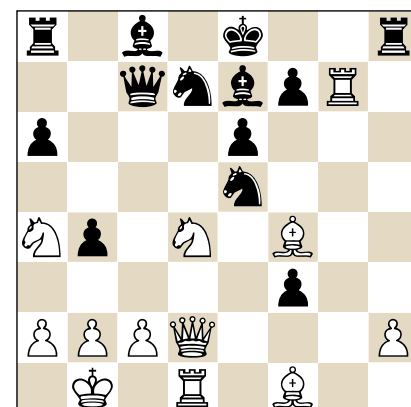
10...♗e5 Not the most common continuation, but the move which greatly concerned me before the game. Black prevents ♘xc6 and prepares ...♗b7, ...b4 and ...d5.

11.g4 b4 12. ♘a4 h6 13. ♖g1 d5 14. ♗f4



The game is heating up. We were both still playing quickly, so it would seem from the outside that we were well prepared. Of course, I couldn't remember a thing from my preparation, but I had to maintain my composure.

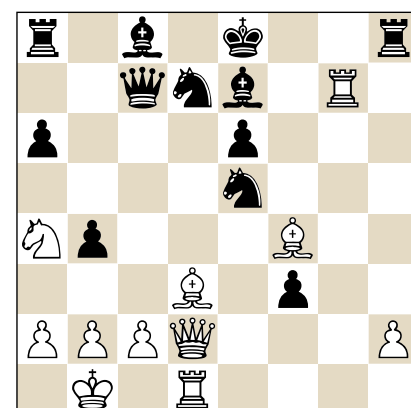
14...dxe4 15.g5 hxg5 16. ♖xg5 ♗fd7 17. ♖xg7 exf3



18. ♘xe6!

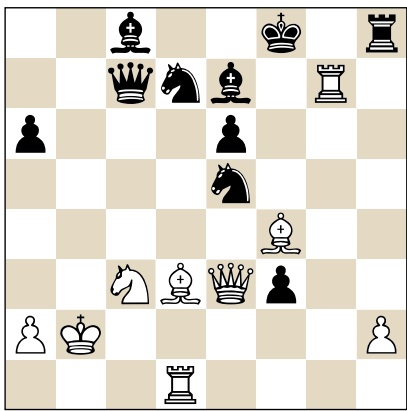
An extremely nasty move, especially if you're not ready for it. Objectively speaking, Black doesn't have to fear White's attack, but over the board it is extremely difficult to defend against.

18...fxe6 19. ♗d3



19...♗f6 Although this move was criticized after the game, it seems pretty good to me. The alternative 19...♖b8 may also be sufficient, but it's needlessly risky and impossible to calculate accurately.

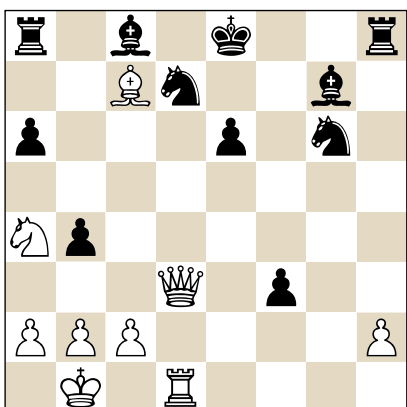
19...♖b8!? (prepares ...♖b5) 20. ♖e3 (20. ♗g6+ ♔d8 21. ♗g5 ♘xg6 22. ♗xe7+ ♘xe7 23. ♖g5 ♖e8 24. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 25. ♖g8+ is only a draw) 20...♖b5!. This is the point of ♖b8. Black needs to defend the knight on e5 at any cost. 21.c4 bxc3 22. ♘xc3 ♖xb2+! 23. ♔xb2 ♔f8 (now the rook is kicked off the 7th)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

24. ♖xe7 (24. ♙h6 ♘xd3+ 25. ♖xd3 ♙xh2+ is a crucial detail. This only works with the king on b2) 24... ♙xe7, and although White still has a strong initiative, Black has good chances to survive.

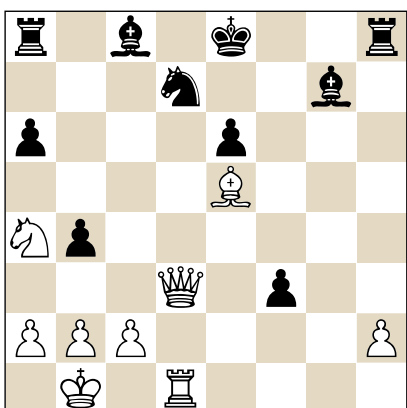
20. ♙g6+ ♘xg6 21. ♙xc7 ♙xg7 22. ♙d3 So we've landed. Black is up heavily in material, but his king is weak and his pieces are tripping over one another.



22... ♘ge5

I spent most of my time calculating 22... ♘e7 23. ♙xf3 ♖a7, which seemed far from clear to me. The machine is more optimistic, and maintains that I have a solid edge after 24. ♙a5.

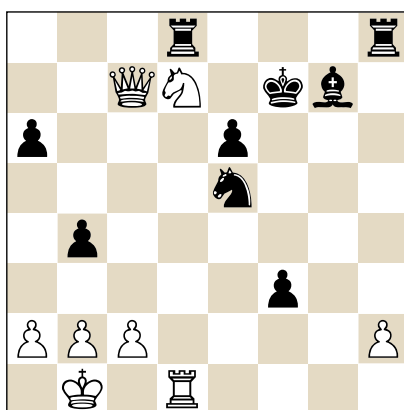
23. ♙xe5



23... ♙xe5?

Already the decisive mistake! It wasn't at all easy to calculate what happens after 23... ♙xe5.

Here goes: 23... ♙xe5! 24. ♙d8+ ♙f7 25. ♙c7+ ♙d7 26. ♙b6 (26. ♖xd7+ ♘xd7 27. ♙xd7+ ♙f6 28. ♙c5 ♖ae8 doesn't offer White much) 26... ♖ad8 27. ♘xd7



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

27... ♙e8!! (this is the devilish trick which we both missed) 28. ♙xd8+ (28. ♙f6+? ♙xf6 29. ♖xd8+ ♙xd8 30. ♙xe5 ♖h6 is already getting dangerous for me!) 28... ♙xd8 29. ♙xe5+ ♙c7 30. ♙xf3, and although I'm a pawn up, Black will have no problem securing a draw.

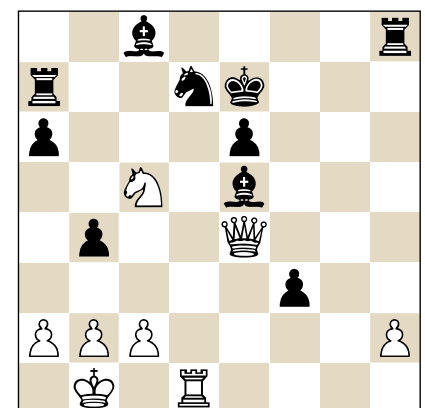


NEW IN CHESS

Fabiano Caruana had a fantastic start that briefly took him across the 2800 mark. In the end the Italian had to settle for fourth place.

24. ♙e4! Stronger than taking the pawn! 24... ♖a7 24... ♖b8 25. ♙c5 wins. 25. ♙c5! Black needs one move to coordinate his pieces, but I don't give him a chance.

25... ♙e7



26. ♖f1!

The move Peter had overlooked. Now I can take on d7 and win a piece without trading rooks.

26. ♙xd7 ♖xd7 27. ♖xd7+ ♙xd7 28. ♙xe5 ♖f8 is something I should always avoid. If I'm forced to block the f-pawn with my queen I won't have any winning chances.

26... ♖f8

26... ♖h5 27. ♙g6 ♙xc5 28. ♙xh5 ♙d7 29. ♖xf3 is completely hopeless



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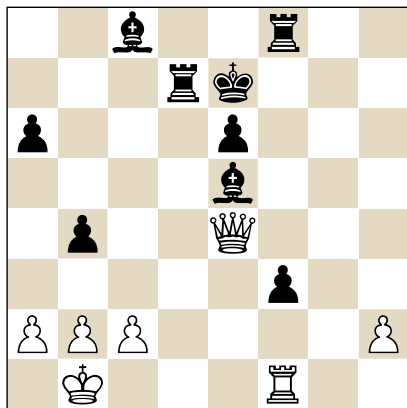
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for Black. The queen is too strong.

27. ♖xd7 ♜xd7

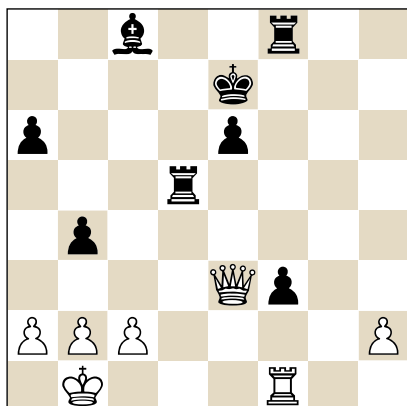


28. ♕xe5

The big difference compared to 26. ♖xd7 is that here we have an extra pair of rooks. With my rook and queen I will inevitably start a decisive attack against Black's king.

28... ♜d5 29. ♕e3

Not the most accurate. 29. ♕g3! keeps the option of ♕h4.



29... ♜df5

29...f2 was probably the best practical chance, but after 30.a3 ♜df5 31.axb4 ♜d7 32.c4 Black can't get his bishop out and he will slowly but surely lose.

30. ♕f2 a5 31. b3 Securing my king before starting any play.

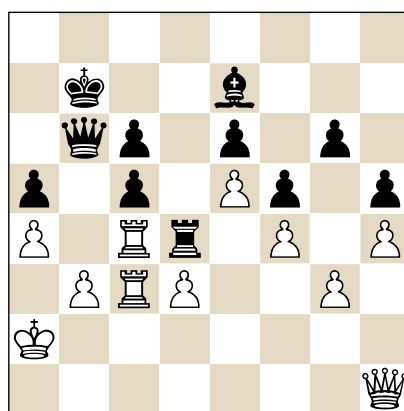
31... ♜d7 32. ♜g1 ♜c6 33. ♖b2 ♜f7 34. ♜g8 ♜f8 35. ♜g4 ♜f7 36. a3 bxa3+ 37. ♖xa3 ♖d6 38. ♜c4 ♜d5 39. ♜c8

Mate is just around the corner, so Black resigned.

2/2 was a fantastic start to the event, but unfortunately it was also the end of the event for me. I didn't score a single win in the remaining games.



Not much has been said yet about Sergey Karjakin, the winner. Last year he started with four wins and won the inaugural Norway Chess tournament very convincingly. This time Sergey and his wife Galiya arrived in Stavanger straight from their honeymoon in Qatar or a similar luxury destination. The newly-weds looked very happy, but what happened on the board was far from convincing. After six rounds the young Russian was on 50 per cent owing to a loss against Aronian and a win against Grischuk. The turning point came in Round 7. In his game against Anish Giri, Karjakin had to defend right from the start and throughout almost the entire game. The game went on till late in the evening, and with Giri endlessly manoeuvring behind the lines and, as far as the naked eye could judge, without making any progress, it was unclear how long it would last. Suddenly, after seven hours of play dramatic things started to happen.

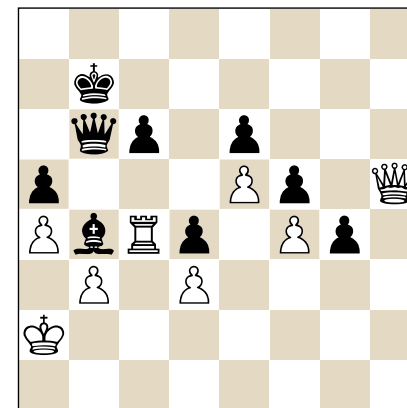


Giri-Karjakin

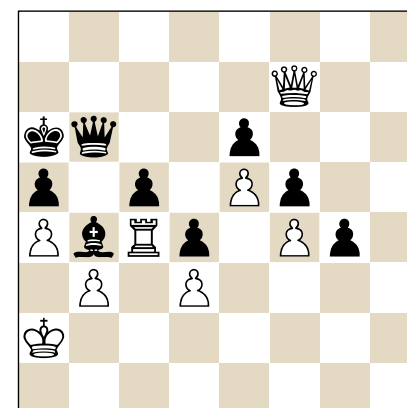
Stavanger 2014 (7)
position after 113. ♕h1

113... ♜f8?! Giri had already had this position in the game before and with the 50-move rule hanging over his head like the sword of Damocles, he realized it was time to act. 113...♜d5! would have stopped Giri's idea. **114. ♜xd4! cxd4 115. ♜c4 ♜b4 116. g4!** There it is, his only chance. **116... hxc4** After 116...fxg4 117. ♕e4! ♕c7 118. ♕xc6 ♕d7 119. ♕xh5 ♕d5 120. ♕xc4 ♕h1 Black keeps some drawing chances,

but the endgame is difficult after 121. ♕e2 ♜c3 122. ♜xc3 dxc3 123. ♕c2 ♕xh4 124. ♕xc3 ♕xf4 125. ♕xa5 ♕d4 126. ♕d2. **117. h5 gxh5 118. ♕xh5**

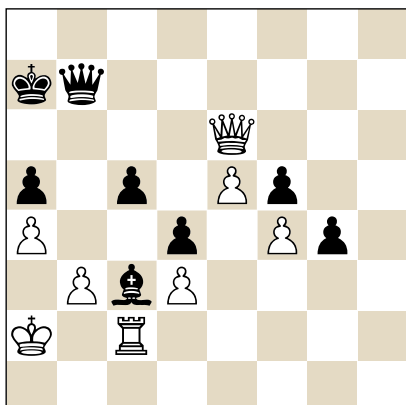


118...c5?! This unexpected move gives White real winning chances. The move that holds the draw and escaped both players' attention was 118...♖a7!.. Here is the main line: 119. ♕f7+ ♕b7 120. ♕xe6 c5 121. ♜c2 ♕h1 122. ♕d7+ ♖b8 123. e6 (the best try; 123. ♕xf5 ♜c3 leads to a draw) 123... ♜c3 124. ♜xc3 dxc3 125. ♕b5+ ♖c8 126. ♕xc5+ ♖b7 127. ♕xc3 ♕h2+ 128. ♖a3 ♕xf4!, and like a Swiss watch, Black is just in time: 129. ♕e1 ♖c6 130. e7 ♕b4+ 131. ♕xb4 axb4+ 132. ♖xb4 ♖d7 133. a5 g3 134. a6 g2 135. a7 g1 ♕ 136. e8 ♕+ ♖xe8 137. a8 ♕+ ♖e7 with a draw. **119. ♕f7+ ♖a6**

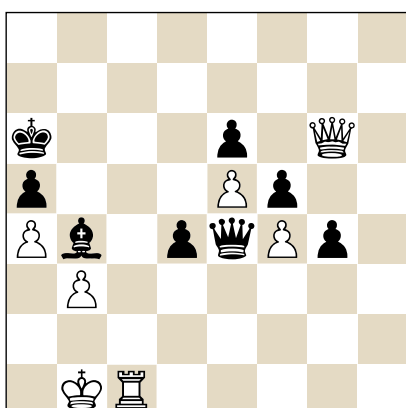


120. ♜c2? Giri's first reflex was 120. ♕d7, but suddenly he saw ...♜c3, cutting off his rook, and he decided to be on the safe side and get his rook into play as fast as possible. But he should have gone for 120. ♕d7!,

when after 120... ♖b7 121. ♗xe6+ ♕a7 122. ♖c2 ♕c3 the win is still not trivial, but it seems to be there:

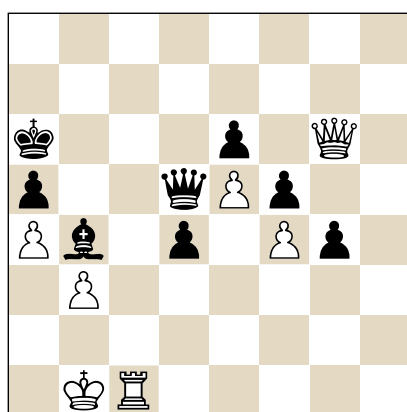


123.b4!! ♕xb4 (if the pawn takes, the white king finds a comfortable space on b3) 124. ♗g8 g3 (this looks desperate, but otherwise ♖h2 will come) 125. ♗xg3 ♗d5+ 126. ♖c4 ♗d7 127. ♕b3! ♗b7 128. ♗h2!, and since he is protected against all Black's threats, White should win. **120... ♗c6** Here Giri realized that he had messed it up. The rook can't even join the attack, because Black will not just give a perpetual, but check-mate! Realizing this, he got seriously concerned. **121. ♗g6 c4!?** Another unpleasant surprise. He saw that in most lines he is not losing, but there no longer is any hope of winning. Suddenly, much to his annoyance, he has to start thinking about the easiest way to hold the position. **122. ♖xc4 ♗g2+ 123. ♕b1 ♗f1+ 124. ♖c1 ♗xd3+ 125. ♕a2 ♗e2+ 126. ♕b1 ♗e4+**



Oops. If his king goes to a1, there will follow 127... ♗d5!. **127. ♕a2 ♗g2+**

128. ♕a1 ♗d5! 129. ♕a2! With the seconds ticking away again and again (he had virtually run out of time and only depended on the small time increment per move) Giri manages to come up with the only defence. **129... ♗g2+ 130. ♕b1 ♗d5**



131. ♖c4?? Instead of securing the draw with 131. ♕a2, Giri deviates. Not because he wanted to avoid a draw, but because he believed this move forced perpetual check, while he was afraid that 131. ♕a2 still offered Black chances to come up with other ideas. **131... ♕c3** And now it hit him that Black is in fact threatening mate. White resigned.

And suddenly, with the same 'ease' with which he had won his first four games in Norway Chess 2013, Karjakin also won his two final games in No Logo Norway Chess 2014 (the tournament's mysterious name had a legal explanation: the main sponsor was Unibet, a betting company. However, under Norwegian law it is forbidden to promote betting. As a result the sponsor could only be mentioned on the international website of the tournament, while in Norway the 'neutral' No Logo was meant to inspire the audience to find out for themselves who was the main sponsor).

In the final round, playing Black, Karjakin managed to win from a bad position against Fabiano Caruana. In the penultimate round he defeated his compatriot Kramnik, who spurned a repetition of moves and paid dearly for his winning attempt.



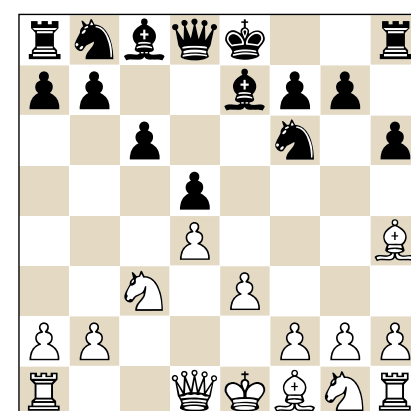
NOTES BY
Sergey Karjakin

QO 11.10 – D35
Sergey Karjakin
Vladimir Kramnik
Stavanger 2014 (8)

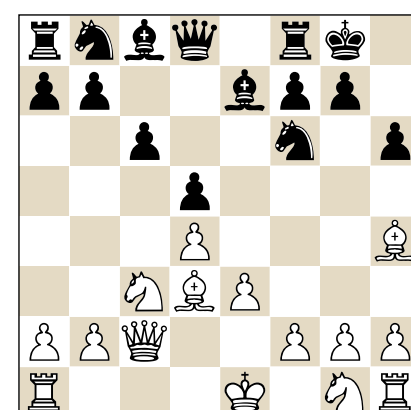
This game was played after a free day and I wanted to surprise my opponent, but, as per usual, I ended up surprising myself.

1.c4 e6 2. ♖c3 d5 3.d4 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5. ♗g5 c6 6.e3 h6 7. ♗h4 ♗e7

Black has chosen a rare line, and somewhere around here I found myself having to start thinking at the board.



8. ♗d3 0-0 9. ♗c2



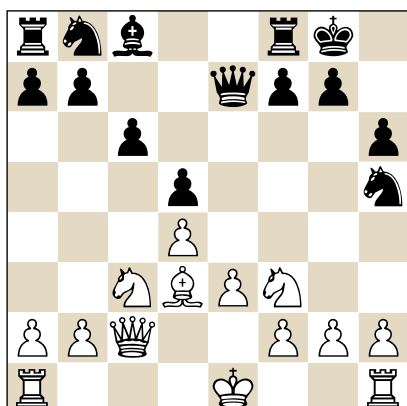
9... ♘h5

This is an altogether rare move, although at high level the position has hardly ever occurred. In a game between Magnus Carlsen and Henrik Carlsen, Arctic Chess Challenge, Tromsø 2007, 9... ♖e8 was tried.

10. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 11. ♘f3

It was safer to develop the knight at

e2, but I conceived the idea of returning the bishop to f1, followed by queenside castling.



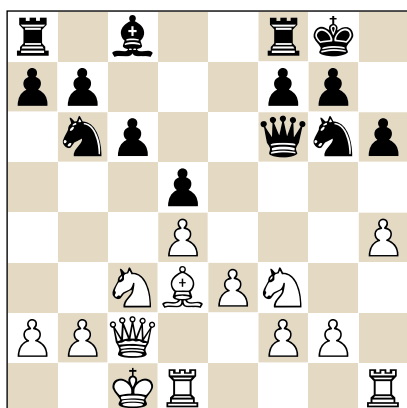
11...Nf4 12. Bf1 Nc7

A logical move, but now the knight on f4 can no longer return to h5.

13.0-0-0 Ng6

The poor move 13...Nh5 allows 14.g4.

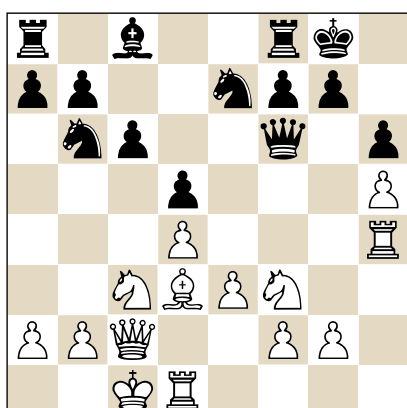
14.h4 Bf6 15. Bd3 Nb6



Here I had already spent a mass of time and so I decided to simplify the play.

16.h5 The tension should have been maintained by 16. Bb1, when White retains slight pressure.

16...Ne7 17. Rh4



17...Bf5! Were it not for this move, everything would be fine for White!

NO LOGO NORWAY CHESS



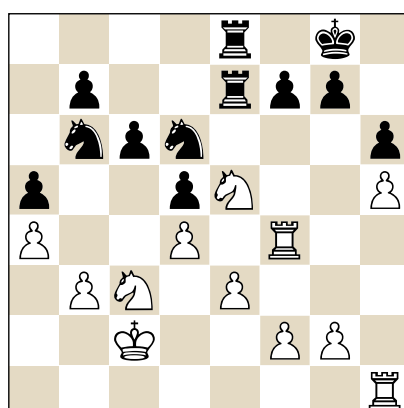
Sergey Karjakin facing Vladimir Kramnik in the second of three wins with which he finished the tournament. 'It was pleasant to win against such a technically strong player in the stage of the game that he plays best of all!'

Black succeeds in exchanging bishops, immediately equalizing.

18. Bxf5 Nothing was given by 18. Rf4 Bxd3 19. Rxd3 Re6 20. g4 f6.

18...Rxf5 19. Rxf5 Nxf5 20. Rf4 Nd6 If the Sofia Rules had not applied at the tournament, we would probably have agreed a draw soon. However, up to a certain point this result seemed the most likely.

21. Ne5 Rae8 22. Rh1 Re7 23. Rc2 Rfe8 24. b3 a5 25. a4

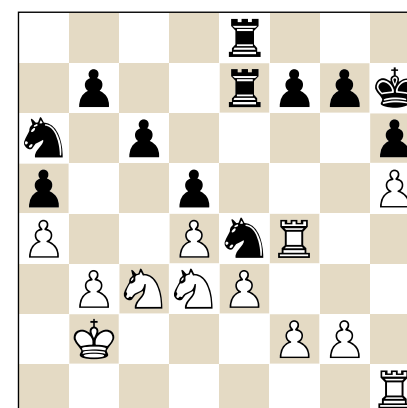


25...Na8! A good resource! Black switches his knight to an active position.

26. Nd3 Nc7 27. Rg4 Na6 28. Rf4 Ne4 29. Bb2

At this point I already had less than 15 minutes on my clock, and Black's desire to sharpen the play is understandable, but this sharpening has obviously not worked out, and he is forced onto the defensive.

29...Kh7

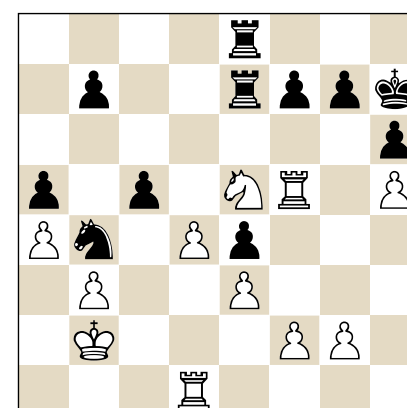


30. Nxe4!

From here on in and up to the time-control I was very pleased with my handling of the game. Despite the lack of time I was able to find the most accurate moves and force Black onto the defensive.

30...dxe4 31. Ne5 Nb4 32. Rf5 c5

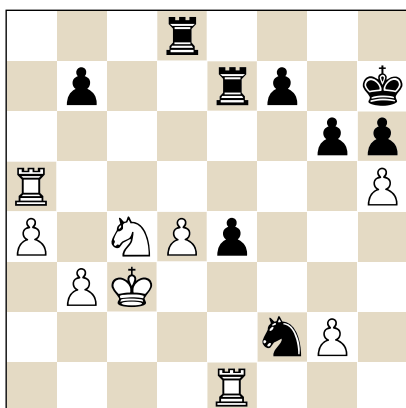
33. Rd1 The ideal square for the rook.



33...cxd4 Bad was 33... Rd8 34. Nc4 Nd3+ 35. Rxd3! exd3 36. Rxc5 with complete domination.

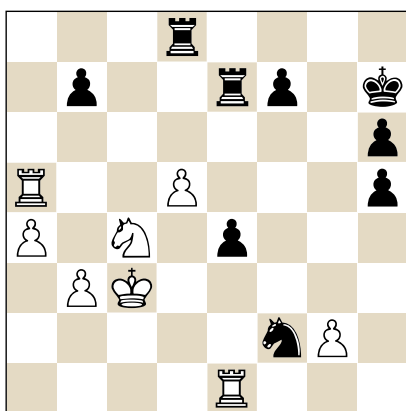
Stavanger

34. exd4 ♖d8 35. ♘c4 ♘d3+
36. ♔c3 g6 37. ♜xa5 ♘xf2 38. ♜e1



38...gxf5 It was tempting to capture the pawn, but Black should have advanced his pawns with 38...f5!, and although here White also retains a small advantage, the game would probably have ended in a draw.

39.d5! White makes use of the time to advance his d-pawn.



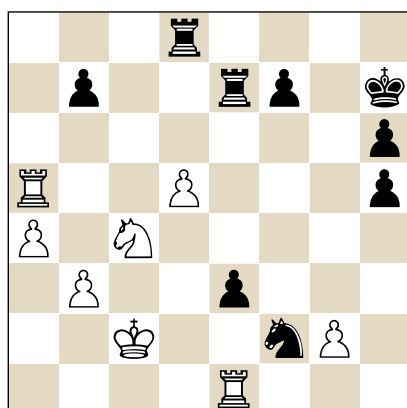
39...e3?! Again a tempting move, especially in a time scramble, but Black should have urgently brought his knight back into play. After the possible 39...♘d3 40. ♜f1 ♘g6 41.d6

‘And suddenly, with the same “ease” with which he had won his first four games in 2013, Karjakin also won his two final games in Norway Chess 2014.’

♜e6 42. ♜b5 ♜d7 43. ♔d4 White is better, but there would still have been everything to play for.

40. ♘c2!

An accurate last move before the time-control. White attacks the e3-pawn. As a result of the unfavourable sharpening of the play Black now faces unpleasant problems, but my opponent failed to readjust in time and did not sense the danger.

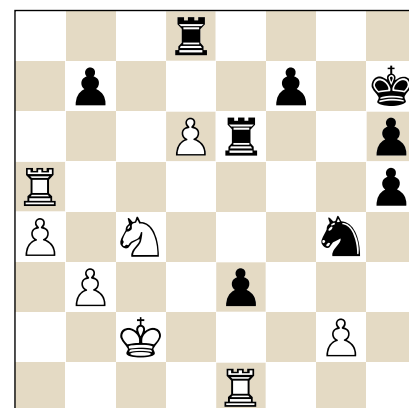


40...♘g4?

40...♘e4 41. ♜xe3 f5 42. ♜b5 was the best chance, but here, too, White has pressure.

41.d6 ♜e6?!

The passive 41...♜ed7 was the best chance, although here also Black's position is extremely unpleasant after 42. ♜xh5.



42. ♜a7!

Simple and strong! Black cannot hold the b7-pawn, and suddenly White is simply winning.

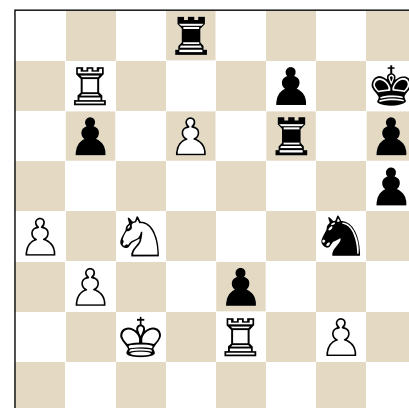
42...♜f6 43. ♜e2

Here it was also possible to play more sharply: 43. ♜xb7! ♜f2+ 44. ♔c3 ♜xg2 45. a5 h4 46. a6 ♜a2 47. a7 h3 48. b4 h2 49. b5, but White's desire to play solidly is understandable.

43...b6

43...♜d7 would also not have saved Black, e.g.: 44. a5 ♜f2 45. ♔d3 ♜f4 46. a6 ♜xc4 47. ♔xc4 b5+ 48. ♔xb5 ♜xa7 49. ♔b6 ♜d7 50. a7 ♜xd6+ 51. ♔c7 ♜d2 52. ♜e1 ♜a2 53. ♔b7 f5 54. a8 ♜ ♜xa8 55. ♔xa8 f4 56. b4 ♘e5 57. b5.

44. ♜b7



44...♜dxd6

Black has nothing better than to give

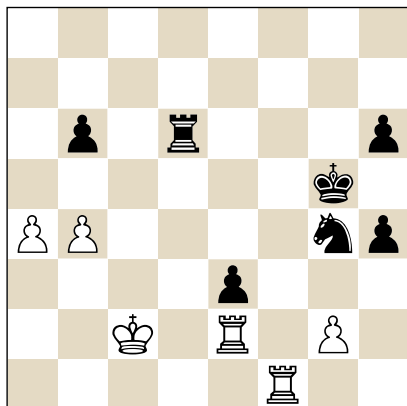
Stavanger 2014

cat. XXI

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		TPR	
1	Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS	2771	*	½	1	1	½	0	½	1	1	½	6	2899
2	Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2881	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	5½	2841
3	Alexander Grischuk	IGM	RUS	2792	0	½	*	0	1	1	½	½	1	½	5	2814
4	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2791	0	½	1	*	½	½	1	½	0	½	4½	2771
5	Veselin Topalov	IGM	BUL	2772	½	½	0	½	*	½	½	0	1	1	4½	2774
6	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2815	1	0	0	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	4	2726
7	Peter Svidler	IGM	RUS	2753	½	½	½	0	½	½	*	½	½	½	4	2733
8	Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2752	0	½	½	½	1	½	½	*	0	½	4	2733
9	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2783	0	½	0	1	0	½	½	1	*	½	4	2729
10	Simen Agdestein	IGM	NOR	2628	½	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	*	3½	2710

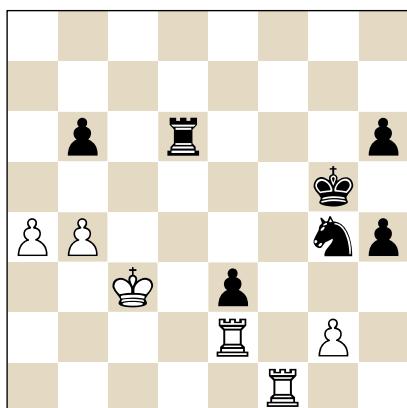
up the exchange, but here, of course, White should win.

45. ♖xd6 ♜xd6 **46.** ♜xf7+ ♔g6
47. ♜f1 ♔g5 **48.** b4 h4



49. ♔c3?!

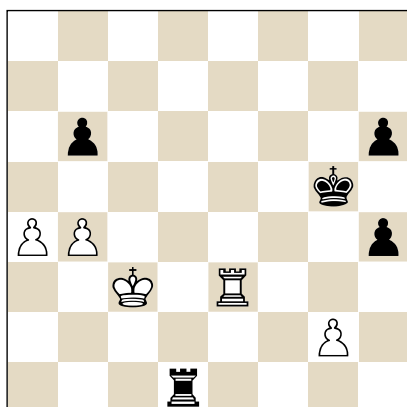
A move which objectively does not throw away the win, but greatly complicates it! 49.a5 bxa5 50.bxa5 ♜a6 51.♜a1 ♔f4 52.♔c3 must be winning for White.



49... ♖f2!

An unexpected resource. Fortunately I was able to compose myself and find a forced way to win.

50. ♜xe3 ♖d1+ **51.** ♜xd1 ♜xd1



52. ♜e5+! An important check.

52... ♔g4 Other moves would not have saved Black either, for example:

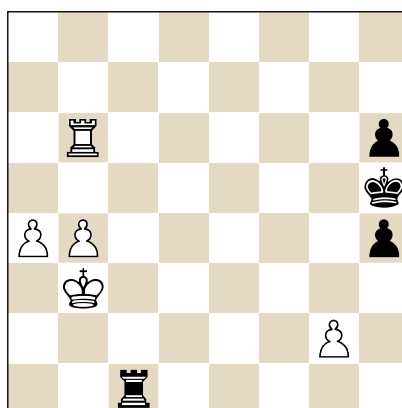


The happy winner, Sergey Karjakin, basking in the admiration of two pillars of the amazing Norway Chess organizing committee, Heidi Jeanette Nygard and Siv Kristin Herikstad.

52... ♔g6 53. ♜e6+ ♔g7 54. ♜xb6 ♜c1+ 55. ♔b3 ♜b1+ 56. ♔c4 ♜b2 57. ♜e6 ♜xg2 58. ♜e3, 52... ♔f6 53. ♜h5, or 52... ♔f4 53. ♜e6.

53. ♜e6 ♜c1+ **54.** ♔b3 ♔h5
55. ♜xb6

Here White is now simply winning, and despite the fact that I began playing uncertainly, there was a great margin for error in the position and I did not throw away the win.

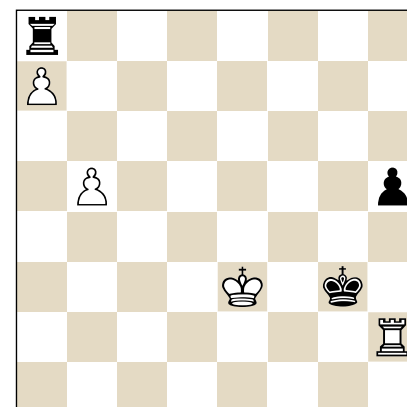


55... ♜g1 **56.** a5 ♜xg2 **57.** a6

57. ♜b5+ ♔g4 58. a6 h3 59. a7 h2 60. a8 ♜ h1 ♜ 61. ♜e4+ ♔g3 62. ♜g6+ ♔f2 63. ♜f5+ ♔e1 64. ♜e5+ was simpler.

57... ♜g3+ **58.** ♔c4 ♜g4+ **59.** ♔d3

♜g8 **60.** ♜b5+ ♔g4 **61.** ♜a5 h3
62. ♜a2 ♜a8 **63.** b5 h5 **64.** ♔e3
♔g3 **65.** a7 h2 **66.** ♜xh2



66... ♔xh2

66... ♜xa7 67. ♜xh5 and the king is too far away.

67. b6 ♔h3

67... ♔g2 68. b7 ♜xa7 69. b8 ♜ ♜a3+ was somewhat more resilient, but here, too, White should win.

68. b7 ♜xa7 **69.** b8 ♜ ♜g7 **70.** ♜e5
♜g3+ **71.** ♔f2 h4 **72.** ♜e4

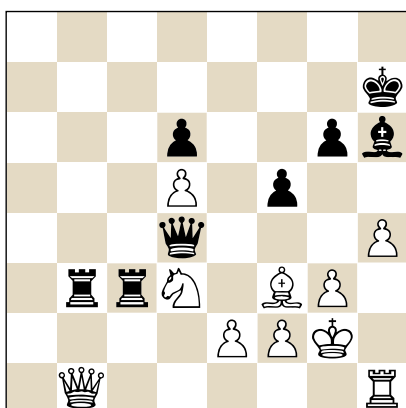
Black resigned.

It was pleasant to win against such a technically strong player in the stage of the game that he plays best of all!



Looking back on 10 riveting days of Norway Chess, I would say that generally speaking nobody impressed very much. As for myself, I made some very stupid moves which annoyed me enormously, but that's life for every chess player, even at this level. 'It happens every day,' as Caruana remarked. This realization actually makes it easier for me to accept my own foolishness, also because some of the blunders the others made were far worse than mine.

In the first round Caruana himself was the lucky one.



Grischuk-Caruana
Stavanger 2014 (1)
position after 37...♖ab3

38. ♔a2??

Almost anything but this, and White

will remain slightly better. **38...♜xd3**
39.exd3 ♜b2 0-1.

It goes both ways, and in the long run perhaps it equals out. It's just that I don't meet these guys so often, and I guess I will still be angry at myself for my mistakes for a couple more weeks. After that perhaps I will see that I probably did incredibly well to play on equal terms with the very best in the world. It wasn't fun to play the tournament, if anyone believes that, and not well paid either, at least not for me, as I finished last.

'It felt like people were more interested in our thoughts and calculations than in a mediocre soccer player's little toe.'

However, it was a tremendous experience, and very cool to be treated like a big star. After every game the players went from one camera to the other commenting on what had happened in the game. It felt like people were more interested in our thoughts and calculations than in a mediocre soccer player's little toe.

Suddenly being recognized for something that one has spent so much of one's life on, actually felt better than I thought it would. I got all the recognition I could dream of when I was active as a player some 30 years ago and I've got my share of recognition as Magnus Carlsen's trainer. I thought I didn't care about such things any longer. I know what I've done and what I'm capable of and don't care about what others may think, I thought, but that's not quite true I must admit. It feels good to be seen.

And seen we were. And not only on TV, online and in newspapers. Every player had his own black and white Mini Cooper with the Norway Chess logo all over it and with our personal drivers that drove us to the playing venue and back. That was really cool. ■

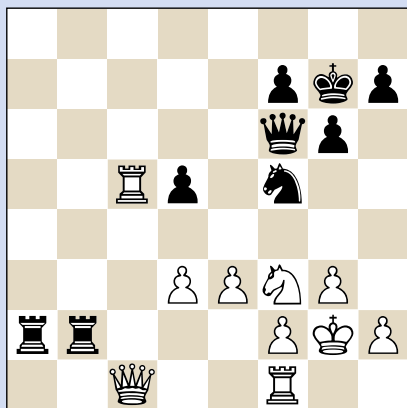


'Every player had his own black and white Mini Cooper with the Norway Chess logo all over it and with our personal drivers that drove us to the playing venue and back. That was really cool.'

Beware: Brilliancy!

Oversights are part of the practice of each and every one of us. In all six positions below world champions (or future ones) failed to spot the winning idea and all games ended undecided. Can you improve on their play?

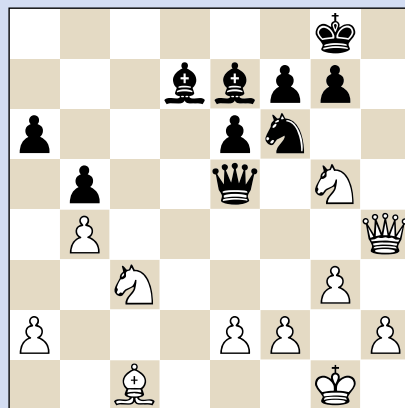
★★★★★



1. Black to play

The game continued **27...d4 28.exd4** **29.♖e3 ♜e6 30.♞e5** and a draw was agreed upon despite White being a pawn up. What did Black overlook?

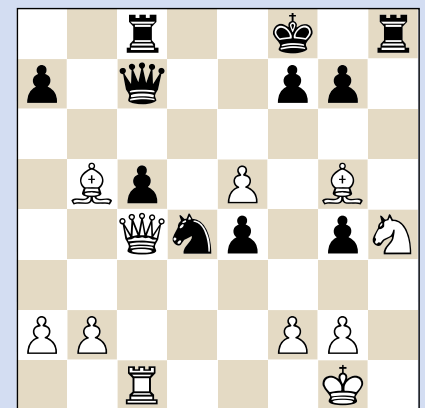
★★★★★



2. White to play

White went for the natural **26.♙b2** and after 40 more moves the point was split. Could White have done better?

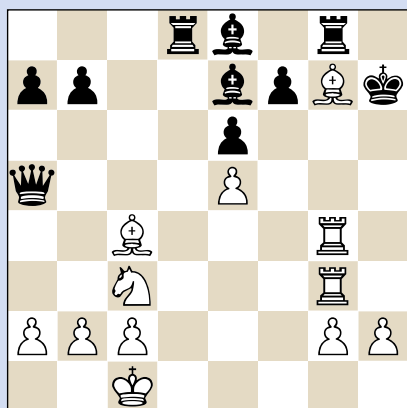
★★★★★



3. White to play

White hoped to win material with **28.♙a6** but after the active **28...♞xe5! 29.♙xc8 ♜xg5 30.♞xc5+ ♜xc5 31.♞xc5 ♞xh4** followed by **32.♞c4? ♞e2+ 33.♙f1 ♞f4 34.♙g1 g3!!** Black was even slightly better. Was there a more vigorous way for White to continue?

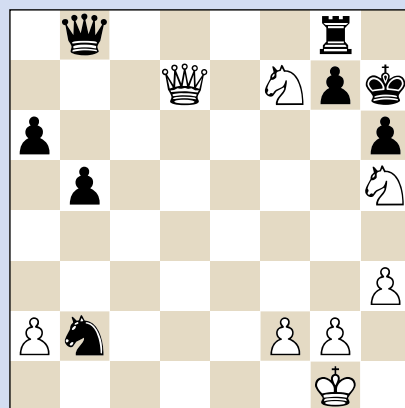
★★★★★



4. Black to play

With an early queen sacrifice White obtained a dangerous attack. Black found nothing better than allowing a positional draw by **21...♞xg7 22.♞xg7+ ♙h6 22...♙h8? 23.♞7g4. 23.♞g8 ♙h7 24.♞8g7+** Was there indeed nothing better than that?

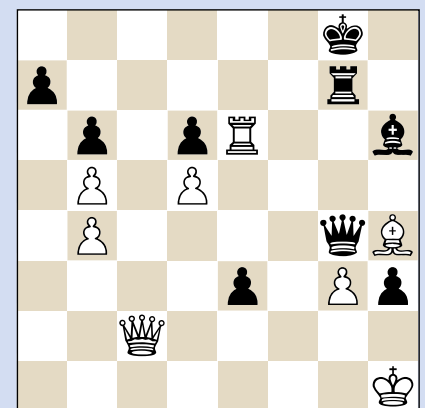
★★★★★



5. White to play

White did not achieve much with **31. h4 ♞c8 32.♞f6+! ♙g6 32...gxf6 33.♞g5+ leads to a perpetual. 33.♞xg8 ♞xd7 34.♞e5+ ♙h7 35.♞xd7 ♞xg8 36.♞c5 a5 37.♙f1 ♞d1 38.♞e4 b4 39.♙e2 ♞b2 40.♙d2 a4** and the game was drawn. What did he miss?

★★★★★



6. Black to play

Black went **40...♞f3+** and after **41.♙g1 ♞f7 42.♞g6+ ♙g7 43.♞e8+ ♞f8 44.♞xf8+ ♙xf8 45.♙e7+! ♙g8 46.♞e6+ ♞f7 47.♞c8+ ♙f8 48.♞g4+ ♙g7 49.♞c8+ ♙h7 50.♞xh3+ ♙h6 51.♙g5! ♞f2+** it was a draw. What chance did Black miss?

The number of stars roughly indicates their estimated level of difficulty: 1 is easiest and 5 most difficult. **Solutions on page 89**



Short Stories

*And I will war, at least in words (and – should
My chance so happen – deeds) with all who war
With Thought; – and of Thought's foes by far most
rude,*

Tyrants and Sycophants have been and are.

I know not who may conquer: if I could

Have such a prescience, it should be no bar

To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation

Of every despotism in every nation.

Lord Byron, Don Juan, Canto IX (August 1822)

I first met Kirsan Ilyumzhinov – then newly elected FIDE President – at a dinner hosted by the Indonesian billionaire Mohamad ‘Bob’ Hasan (who would later be convicted of corruption) in Jakarta, in December 1995. I knew this ostensibly genial, youthful man was also President of Kalmykia, but, like most people, I didn’t have a clue where it was, and was too embarrassed to ask. Thankfully, after some minutes, the gentleman to my right posed the question on everyone’s mind. Kirsan carefully deliberated over his reply. ‘Kalmykia is a Mongolian-speaking, Buddhist Republic ... in Europe.’ I almost burst out laughing, but just managed to check myself in time when I realised he was apparently being serious.

The most revealing thing about Kirsan’s statement is that it is false. The dominant language in Kalmykia is Russian, and not Mongolian. Kirsan’s exaggeration was nearly as gross as claiming that the most south-westerly county of England is Cornish-speaking. Certainly, if you search for long enough you can find someone familiar with the local tongue, but that, of course, is not what he had implied.

On this particular occasion it barely mattered if in trying to demonstrate kinship with fellow ethnic Asians, in a convivial atmosphere, over a fine meal, the FIDE President fibbed. Alas, it would soon become clear that a cavalier disregard for veracity is very much Kirsan’s hallmark – even on more weighty subjects. Misrepresentations, distortions, false promises and even downright lies all regularly flow from the lips of his cherubic face.

Warning signs were all there for any who cared to notice. The announcement that the 1996 Kamsky-Karpov World Championship would take place

in Saddam Hussein’s Baghdad should have jolted and worried even the most apathetic observer. Indeed the backlash against this planned move was so great that Kirsan was obliged to recant and implausibly claim that the whole idea had been a joke. That same year, Hans Ree wrote (in *New In Chess*, issue 1 p.40-44) about Kirsan’s despotic abolition of the Kalmykian constitution. He also reported the detailed allegations of Larisa Yudina, editor of the opposition newspaper *Sovietskaya Kalmykia*, that Kirsan was looting the state coffers. In 1998, shortly before the Elista Olympiad, Ms. Yudina would be found murdered in a ditch, with multiple knife wounds. Two of Kirsan’s aides would be convicted of this horrific crime. Criticism of Ilyumzhinov could literally be fatal. By macabre coincidence,

one chapter of Kirsan’s autobiography published that same year was entitled ‘It only takes two weeks to have a man killed’.

Tyranny

In the early years of his presidency Kirsan poured money into chess, which assuaged many a nagging doubt both about the man himself and the dubious company he kept. Nobody knew exactly where the lucre was coming from (although speculation was rife), but as long as the taps of munificence flowed all was politely overlooked. It was in this period that the myth of Kirsan the universal benefactor arose. So deeply did this idea take root that few people noticed when the giving quietly ceased. I put it to the FIDE Treasurer, Nigel Freeman, at dinner in Athens some time ago that Kirsan had not contributed anything positive to the FIDE accounts for many a year. Nigel confirmed this was the case and added that Kirsan even claimed expenses for attending FIDE meetings – an unthinkable event when his first term in office began. There is nothing untoward with him being reimbursed, of course – the President is perfectly entitled to that – but his actions belied his repeated brag of being an extraordinarily wealthy patron. This myth of Midas-like riches, combined with great generosity, is an essential component of the Kirsan image; without its widespread acceptance the support he enjoys would collapse. During the current election campaign, Kirsan has repeatedly boasted of spending \$70 million of his own money in support of chess – a statement as implausible as it is unverifiable. Indeed, in an eerie

‘Kirsan alone spent an eye-watering 211,594 euros of FIDE money on travel expenses in the last year of published accounts.’

echo of the accusations made by the late Larisa Yudina, the evidence suggests the contrary may be true. The public exposure of a secret, signed agreement with Agon, in which Kirsan awarded himself 51% of the commercial rights to FIDE events, puts the onus firmly on him to explain how and why he is not guilty of robbing the organisation over which he presides.

A constant theme throughout Kirsan’s near two decades of autocratic rule in FIDE is the shameless blurring of lines between the man and the organisation, as epitomized by the slogan ‘Kirsan is FIDE and FIDE is Kirsan’ which was emblazoned on the polo shirts that he once distributed (I kept a souvenir until last year, when I could stand it no more). Rather than ‘Gens una sumus’ a far more appropriate motto would be ‘L’état, c’est moi’. Being the embodiment of FIDE has countless advantages, of course. When brazenly using the FIDE website to vigorously promote his own re-election, he can brush off accusations of a gross abuse of office: in his mind, his own interests and those of FIDE are one and the same thing. Likewise, the Kirsan camp thinks nothing of unethically instructing FIDE staff to collect election nominations

on his behalf, and they, being obedient servants of the man, but not, alas, of chess, do not hesitate to do exactly as they are told.

If all this were not pernicious enough, the flabbergasting waste of FIDE financial resources used in a desperate attempt to ensure Kirsan’s re-election is arguably an even bigger disgrace.

For many months now his henchmen, minions and sycophants have crisscrossed the globe in a frenzy of activity in an effort to shore up his floundering support. This is done on the flimsiest of pretexts (chess in schools, training seminars etc.) so that funds can be provided with a fig-leaf of legitimacy. Kirsan alone spent an eye-watering 211,594 euros of FIDE money on travel expenses in the last year of published accounts. The figure for this election year is likely to be significantly higher. It is simply not credible that all of these so-called ‘working visits’ are primarily in the interest of FIDE – rather than the man himself. Kasparov recently wryly remarked that he does not expect to find a single euro remaining in the FIDE accounts when he takes office in August. Quite frankly, he should consider himself lucky if he does not find substantial debts.



Kirsan Ilyumzhinov on horseback in traditional Kalmykian attire during the 1998 Olympiad in Elista.

DAGOBERT KOHLMAYER



NEW!

Master Class Vol. 3: Alexander Alekhine

In view of his numerous fantastic combinations the fourth world chess champion Alexander Alekhine is rightly considered an attacking genius. But at the latest during his 1927 WCh victory over Capablanca the

world of chess could see that the Russian (who by that time was already a French citizen) was also able to play simple technical positions equally brilliantly. To this day, his triumph over Capablanca is reckoned to be a magnificent achievement of the first order since at that point the Cuban himself was in the prime of his life and at the same time thought to be unbeatable.

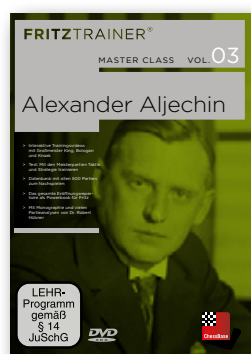
At the start of the 1930s Alekhine was at the height of his creative powers and was victorious in the tournaments in San Remo 1930 and Bled 1931 with record results and enormous leads over his rivals. But Alekhine was also a prolific writer of chess books, in which he provided deep insights into the thought processes of a world chess champion.

Just like his predecessors and successors on the chess throne, Alekhine demonstrated outstanding strengths in all the phases of the game of chess. Dorian Rogozenco, Mihail Marin, Oliver Reeh and Karsten Müller present the fourth world chess champion and his openings, his understanding of chess strategy, his endgame artistry and, last but not least, his immortal combinations in video lectures and in an interactive test in which you are invited to work out the combinations for yourself. In addition, the DVD contains all of Alekhine's games, many of which are annotated. The DVD is rounded off with tables for the most important tournaments and other informative texts. Video running time: 4 hours 54 min.

29,90 €

Master Class Vol.1: Bobby Fischer 29,90 €

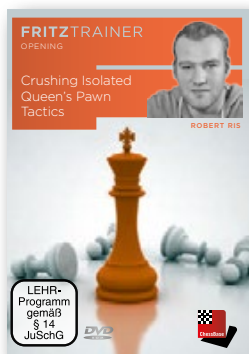
Master Class Vol. 2: Mihail Tal 29,90 €



Robert Ris: Crushing Isolated Queen's Pawn Tactics

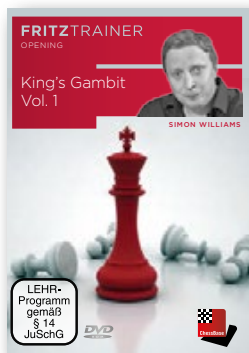
The aim of this DVD is to offer the viewer tactical exercises that also illustrate the attacking prospects within IQP positions. The content of the DVD emphasizes the importance of understanding this type of pawn structure. To this end, well-known masterpieces like Steinitz-Von Bardeleben, Hastings 1895 and Kamsky-Short, Linares (Candidates) 1994 are covered in depth to better acquaint you with the typical plans of the attacking side, but of course less well-known games have been included as well. The Quiz Questions are not grouped according to particular themes, leaving the viewer to make a conscious effort to choose between several plans: Should I play a rook lift to the 3rd rank to increase the pressure, play for the central thrust d4-d5 or deploy an immediate sacrifice within striking distance of the Black king?

29,90 €



Simon Williams: King's Gambit Vol. 1 and 2

8.5 out of 10 with the King's Gambit - that's the personal record of Simon Williams in recent years. No wonder, that the English GM fell in love with this unique, old and creative opening. On his popular and critically acclaimed DVDs about the King's Gambit he invites the reader to (re)discover this most romantic of all chess openings and to play successful attacking chess!



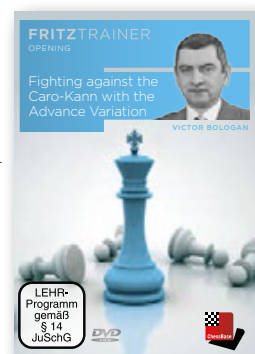
On his first DVD Williams presents his repertoire recommendation (1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Bc4), and on his second DVD he completes the material by showing what may happen if White plays 3.Nf3 or if Black declines the King's Gambit - which you have to know if you want to play 3.Bc4 as well of course. Get inspired by the authors enthusiasm fired by lots of great attacking games and crushing mating attacks!

29,90 € each

Victor Bologan: Fighting against the Caro-Kann with the Advance Variation

The Caro-Kann Defence is one of the most solid replies for Black after 1.e4. Bologan played it himself for many years with black, so he knows how difficult is to gain an advantage with white. „My choice of the Advance Variation for White is because of the complex strategical play in which White has a long-term space advantage. If he also understands the ideas of this opening well, then White will be able to keep up the pressure. The fact that such players as Gashimov, Karjakin, Caruana, Anand, Svidler, Grischuk and Shirov often play the Advance Variation against the Caro-Kann will give you the much needed chess confidence, while watching their games will inspire you to great creative and performance achievements. The DVD is made for a large audience, starting with beginners up to higher level players. It is carefully structured, which will help you to find your way around the masses of new theory, and to remember just what you need to know before the game. One famous grandmaster confessed me that he studied most of my DVDs, and that he is also using them for his students. Full steam ahead against the Caro-Kann!“

29,90 €



Short Stories

The long Kirsan reign has been characterised by overt favouritism. Typically arbiting jobs – even wild card qualification to FIDE tournaments – are all doled out disproportionately to Kirsan loyalists. The flip side of this ‘generosity’ is a mean-spirited vindictiveness towards political opponents. That such discrimination flouts the FIDE statutes goes without saying, but legal niceties have never been much of a concern for Kirsan and his cohorts. Here is a man who in 2010 appointed five Vice Presidents – as a reward for political services rendered – when the statutes only allowed to him to appoint, unambiguously, ‘two and no more’. Rather than asking the FIDE General Assembly to approve a change of statutes, he needlessly squandered hundreds of thousands of euros in legal fees by choosing to defend the matter in court, in a trial of political strength. The nastiness of his regime can be gauged by the proposal of the Turkish Rottweiler, Ali Nihat Yazici, to the 2012 General Assembly to expel seven major federations including my own. The passing of this motion would have been an unmitigated catastrophe for FIDE as dozens of other federations would have marched straight out of the door in solidarity. Everyone involved understood this and so the proposal was duly withdrawn before the vote – although not without allowing Ali and others to first vent their fury. By leaving the threat of excommunication on the table until the last moment, and the growling dog unmuzzled and off his leash, the regime sent out a strong warning never to oppose.

With a few weeks still remaining before the ballot, it is already safe to conclude that the 2014 FIDE Presidential Election is by far the dirtiest in history. In love, and most definitely in war, truth is the first casualty. If one were to take the Stalinist propagandist claims of the pro-Kirsan organs at face value, his re-election is a foregone conclusion. Invincibility is another cornerstone of the Kirsan myth. Almost no one – and I mean that quite literally – votes for Kirsan because they think he is any good. They vote for him either because they have been offered something or they think he is going to win. Or both. The moment enough people start to doubt his invincibility, he is finished. Some weeks ago Kirsan tried to deliver a knock-out blow by showing the nominations of an

‘Now is not the moment for hesitation: now is the moment of destiny. Kasparov will win, if the election is even approximately fair.’

absolute majority of federations. He fell well short. Of the 56 federations that apparently had given him their support some had done so out of ignorance – either thinking the paper was a mere technicality, or because their English wasn’t good enough and they had misunderstood altogether what they had

been asked to sign. Other individuals had mischievously and in secret given their support against the wishes of their entire Boards. The publication of this list exposed both the accidental mishaps and the serious wrongdoers.

The truth of the matter is that Kirsan is only certain to win one continent – America. Contrary to his claims he will undoubtedly lose Africa, although perhaps not by much. Tired of empty Kirsan promises, great swathes of Asia have fallen under Kasparov control, including traditional strongholds like the Philippines. Europe, which has voted against Kirsan by a significant margin in recent years, will do so again. Worryingly, though, some European federations (like Switzerland) are tiring of voting for what they imagine to be inevitably the losing side. They are mistaken. Now is not the moment for hesitation: now is the moment of destiny. Kasparov will win, if the election is even approximately fair.

Unfortunately, the vote-rigging has already started. Astonishingly, after years of recognition the federation of Gabon has simply been removed from the FIDE website soon after it expressed support for Kasparov, to be replaced by another (pro-Kirsan) body. The President of the Afghanistan federation has also been removed after he made the same ‘mistake’. Papua New Guinea has suddenly been asked to become accredited with the National Olympic Committee, although its vote has never been questioned until now. The list of dubious and illegal actions goes on...

After 19 years in office, the morally bankrupt Kirsan regime has shown that it will stop at nothing to remain in power. I have deliberately refrained from emphasising that Kirsan enjoys the full backing, with attendant diplomatic support, of his controversial President, Vladimir Putin. There is more than ample reason to vote for change without needing to take a stand on internal Russian politics. ■

Dubai

A Winner Takes it All

Hungry Carlsen also gobbles up Rapid and Blitz World titles.



At the FIDE World Rapid & Blitz Championship, Magnus Carlsen proved that he is the best in any FIDE rated time-control. Hungry for success after his second place in Norway Chess, the Norwegian triumphed twice with his trademark blend of deep understanding, great technique, experimentation, bluff and a sense of humour. Close to 100 GMs flocked to Dubai, lured by a \$400,000 prize-fund. Or, as **Loek van Wely** puts it, 'a bunch of blind squirrels hoping to find a nut'. Our man-on-the-spot also explains his idea of 'defining moments', those little details that can make or break a player's tournament.



CATHY ROGERS

The 2014 Rapid & Blitz World Championships were held in the Dubai Chess & Culture Club, one of the finest chess clubs in the world.

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Last year's Rapid & Blitz World Championships took place in Khanty-Mansiysk, where, as in Dubai, the keyword is oil. Still, for some reason Dubai sounded much more tempting than Khanty-Mansiysk, and so

the chess elite travelled en masse to Dubai. Did they fancy the great night-life, even if they didn't go out? Did they mind that it was 40 degrees Celsius outside? Did they stay longer to combine business with pleasure? All rhetorical questions! They went there for the money, and that makes sense, I think. Or does it? Chess players are not known for taking rational decisions away from the board, so I took a closer look at the money theory: you have 100 contenders and the prize-fund is \$400,000, so the average will be 4,000\$ each. And if you are an above average player, you should be doing better than 4K. How simple could it be? Just recently I got con-

fronted with the Monty Hall problem and still my brain has issues accepting the truth. On this one I didn't fare too much better either. The fact is that two-thirds of the field left Dubai empty-handed. Apart from the usual suspects, we, the blind squirrels, were trying to find a nut. I love this expression a lot and tend to use it when Ivan S. (who happened to be my host in Dubai) happens to win an endgame. As you may have understood, you have more chance of finding someone who speaks Latin these days!

Although my life philosophy is to live life to the max, I decided this was not the moment to stay in the Burj Al Arab. That moment will come one

day, but not only should it be earned first, I also didn't want to raise any suspicions with my wife. After all, she had to stay home and officially I was at work. Luckily, 20 years of hard rivalry brought its dividends. Just six months ago, Hotel Sokolov had opened its doors in Dubai and it had a special rate for old warriors: a few bottles of gin! That was a real steal, especially if you consider that coffee and steaks were included! Ivan is working as a coach in the United Arab Emirates these days and this was a perfect moment to pay him a visit.

So the tournament situation was ideal: wife at home and spending time with old buddies (I am aware that writing for New In Chess may have its consequences, but I'd rather be a dissident than swallow my tongue!). But apparently it was not supposed to be. It's what I call 'the defining moment', that little something that happens in a tournament that makes you think: 'Hmm, this is not looking good, this is not going to be my tournament.'

One of my favourite examples to explain this concept is Vladimir Kramnik, who had a few defining moments in 2013:

1) The London Candidates', the last round, playing Black vs. Ivanchuk. Against his nature, forced by the tournament situation, he felt compelled to play for a win. The result: he lost. What was needed in the end? A draw.

2) The Alekhine Memorial in Paris/St Petersburg. He was to play his former second Laurent Fressinet, who had been the subject of serious teasing. I know what I am talking about; I've been Vladimir's second as well. To me he was always saying: 'Why do you always invent those losing novelties?' Or after I had played a novelty of which I was quite proud: 'I analysed this five years ago and I discarded it.'

The result: 'Fress' butchered him badly and in great style with black. It took a while before Vlad got his voice back.

3) Moscow, Tal Memorial. Vlad, having done well in the blitz drawing

of lots, decided it was time to be smart and took number 7, for one extra black game, in view of the tie-break rules (in case of a tie more blacks will win). This unconventional decision cost him dearly, since Magnus wasted no time picking number 4 and smashed him with white. The result: one week of no sleep (if not more) and an unshared last place.

I had my first defining moment in Dubai when I lost a dream position to Nakamura. The fact that I got this

'Magnus is not as resourceful as Hikaru, but then Hikaru needs it more than Magnus.'

dream position against him must also have been a bad sign for Nakamura, by the way. Following this loss I managed to crawl back, only to lose to Bacrot again. And that was more or less it.

Many other players had their defining moments, too, crucial moments that decided on their tournaments. I believe that only Aronian had some windfalls, but he violated the rule: 'when you are lucky, you should use your chances!'

But before I show you some of these moments, some words have to be said about Magnus Carlsen, who started by winning the rapid championship, scoring 11 from 15, ahead of Caruana, Anand, Aronian, Morozevich and Tomashevsky, and earning \$40,000 (the four players mentioned got \$24,000 each).

Magnus does have a few weaknesses. First of all he is not blunder-proof (see his game against Anand). However, he has the ability to bounce

back; a loss makes him fight even harder the next game.

Another weakness is that he gets bored sometimes. Once, during the rounds, I saw him playing a game called Sealball, with Nepo as a heavily interested onlooker. Your reporter was fast in drawing his conclusions: Magnus and Nepo were not studying any topical line in their training session!

What he doesn't like is when you attack him fiercely, go for his king, for example, or play something very theoretical (Vishy, are you listening?). Although I should add that this is what I tried myself in Wijk aan Zee in 2013, with the result that Magnus spent less than 30 minutes on his win. So success is not guaranteed!

Magnus is very strong in endgames. Once you have reached an endgame against Magnus, you have probably missed your chances before. However, the stats for the lucky few who manage to reach a better endgame against him are encouraging. There were three of them in 2013: Ivanchuk, Wang Hao and Caruana. All three of them got to a (drawish) rook endgame a pawn up and all three of them won!

Magnus is very tough and resilient. Not as resourceful as Hikaru, but then Hikaru needs it more than Magnus. And once he gets his chances, he is ruthless.

But let's look at some chess. To begin with, a game between Magnus and someone he has worked with. The winner of the 2012 Mind Games I considered to be a dark horse. However, his confidence had received serious blows recently. First of all, a video of him playing Magnus, in which the latter called him 'too weak, too slow' went viral. And then another nail in the coffin was when he lost to me (while he was being trash-talked in French!) in a few blitz games, making him cry out: 'If I cannot even beat you, how am I supposed to beat Maxime then?' Now he had his chance of redemption.

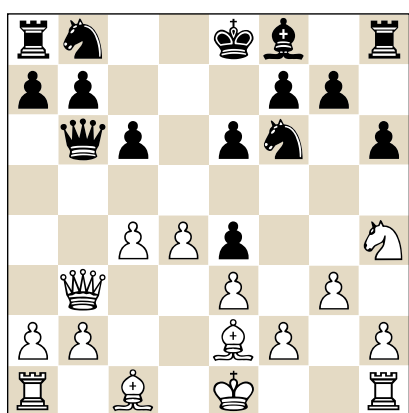
SL 1.4 – D11

Magnus Carlsen

Laurent Fressinet

Dubai rapid 2014 (7)

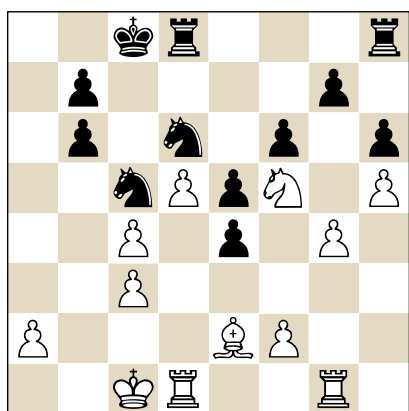
**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6
4.♘bd2 ♙f5 5.♘h4 ♙e4 6.♚b3
♚b6 7.e3 e6 8.♙e2 h6 9.♘xe4
dxe4 10.g3**



10...c5 Also 10...♚xb3 11.axb3 ♙b4+ 12.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 13.♙xd2 c5 looks good for Black to me.

**11.♙d2 ♘c6 12.♙c3 cxd4 13. exd4 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 ♙b4 15.♘g2
♙xc3 16.bxc3 e5 17.♚xb6
17.d5 ♘b8 18.♘e3 ♘a6** transposes.
**17...axb6 18.d5 ♘b8 19.♘e3
♘a6 20.g4 ♘c5 21.h4 ♘e8 22.
h5 ♘d6 23.♙hg1 f6 24.♘f5**

With positionally aggressive play 'Mr. too weak, too slow' got a very nice position. I am sure Magnus would love to have Black here. Now the moment had come to step up the action.



24...♘xf5?!

Too timid. 24...♙d7! would have shown Magnus who the real boss was!: 25.♘xg7 ♙a8 26.♙b1 (26.♙b2 ♙a4) 26...e3! 27.fxe3 ♘de4, and White's position is falling apart.

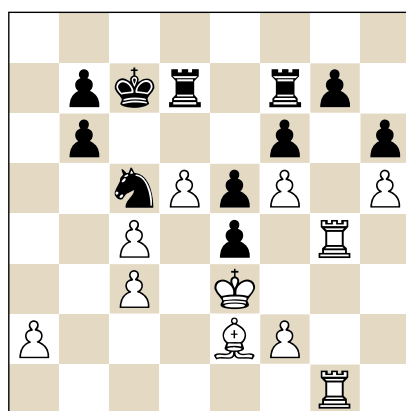


CATHY ROGERS

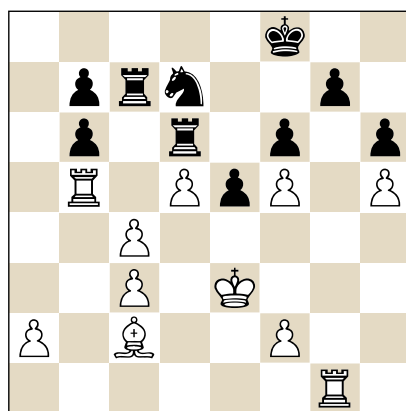
Magnus Carlsen can barely contain his laughter after he has withdrawn his Alekhine Defence knight to g8 following Laurent Fressinet's 2.e5. Black won the blitz game easily.

**25.gxf5 ♙d7 26.♙g4 ♙f8 27.♙dg1
♙ff7 28.♙d2 ♙c7 29.♙e3**

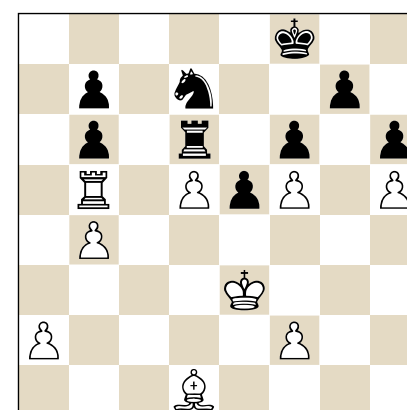
Unfortunately, it's impossible for Black to get his knight to d6. And on the other hand he is being tied to g7. Eventually he will lose his e4-pawn, but that is not such a big deal.



**29...♙a4 30.♙d1 ♘c5 31.♙c2
♙d8 32.♙xe4 ♙e8 33.♙c2 ♙f8
34.♙b1 ♙d6 35.♙b5 ♙c7 36.♙g1
♘d7**



37.♙gb1? A blunder. **37...♙xc4**
Oops. **38.♙1b3 ♙h4 39.♙d1 ♙f4
39...♘c5** was winning immediately.
40.♙3b4 ♙xb4 41.cxb4?



41...♙e7? 41...♘b8 42.a4 ♘a6 43.a5
♘c7 44.♙xb6 ♘xd5+ was not so hard
to find, because with White's rook
trapped you always look for ways to
attack it. Maybe Fress was trying to
keep his job? Not sure this is the right
method!

**42.a4 ♙d8 43.a5 ♙c7 44.♙a4
♙d8 45.♙d3 ♙c7 46.♙b3 ♙d8
47.♙c3 ♙c7 48.f3 bxa5 49.♙xa5
♘b6 50.♙c5+ ♙d8 51.♙b2 ♘c8
52.♙a5 ♙c7 53.♙a1 ♙d7 54.♙g1
♘d6 55.♙c2 ♙b6 56.♙d3 ♙c7
57.♙b3 ♙e7 58.♙c3 ♙c7+
59.♙d2 ♙d7 60.♙e3 ♙e7 61.♙g2
♙c7 62.♙d2 ♙e7 63.♙e3 ♙c7
64.♙d2 ♙e7** Draw.

Pity, chances for redemption missed,

plus the bragging rights. After this game 'Mr. too weak, too slow' was treated with contempt again. In the blitz it was 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8, and Black won easily...

Hikaru Nakamura did poorly in the rapid, finishing 29th and earning a measly \$62 (you read correctly). The American is a dangerous player, needless to say, but also dangerous for himself. I have the feeling that in the slower time-controls against the classical Russian chess school he is having a hard time. Hikaru was playing too many dubious lines. In blitz you can get away with that. However, in rapid things are different.

CATHY ROGERS



Hikaru Nakamura did poorly in the rapid, finishing 29th and earning a measly \$62. In his game against Evgeny Tomashevsky the classical Russian chess school prevailed.

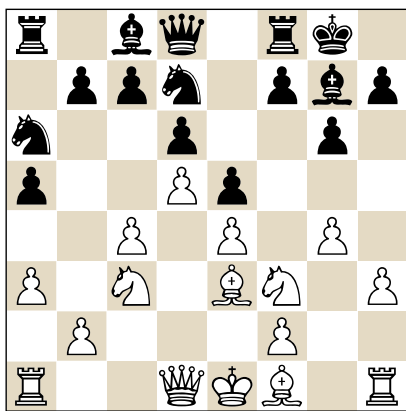
KI 20.5 – E90

Evgeny Tomashevsky

Hikaru Nakamura

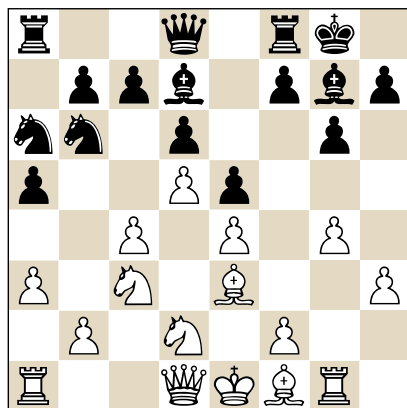
Dubai rapid 2014 (14)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d6 4.e4
♙g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.h3 e5 7.d5 a5 8.
g4 ♘a6 9.♙e3 ♘d7 10.a3



10...♘b6 Although this is the first move suggested by my engine, I feel the urge to say something about it. Hikaru has been successful with this (in my opinion) unnatural move in a similar position in his match with Navara. However, when I saw my wife (WIM, Elo around 2150) playing ...♘b6 in the King's Indian, I gave her a very hard time; you can take my word on that! Needless to say, later it was payback time, when I also played ...♘b6 in this year's French League. My reason was a pawn, I hope Hikaru also had very compelling reasons!

11.♖g1 ♙d7 12.♘d2

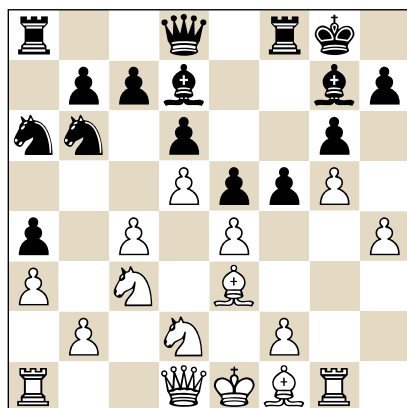


12...a4?!

With knights on d7 and c5 this move would make sense. Now it looks more like depriving Black of any counter-play on the queenside.

12...♘c5, preparing some ...♘ba4 or ...c6, looked better to me.

13.g5 f5 14.h4

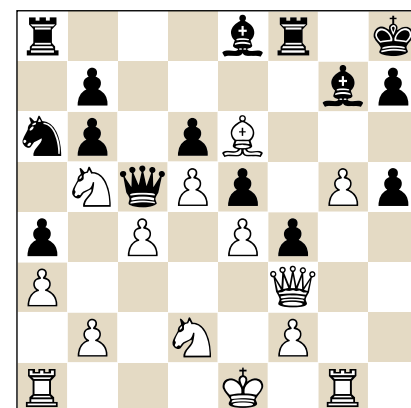


14...f4?

Positionally not acceptable.

He should have played 14...♘xd5 15.exd5 f4 16.♘de4 fxe3 17.fxe3 ♘c5 and positionally things are not so dramatic.

15.♙xb6 cxb6 16.♖f3 ♖c8 17.♘b5 ♖c5 17...♙xb5 18.cxb5 ♘c5 19.h5 is no fun either, but maybe it had to be played.
18.h5 gxh5 19.♙h3 ♙e8 20.♙e6+ ♔h8



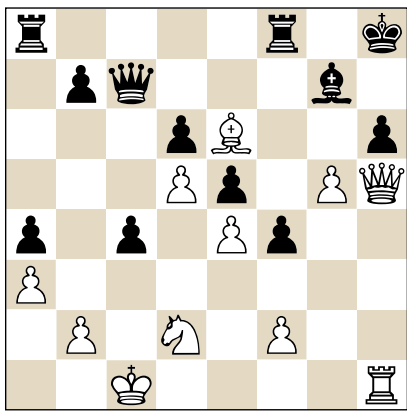
21.♖h1

21.b4!? was an interesting option, but why make things complicated: 21...axb3 22.♘xb3 ♖xc4 23.♘xd6 ♖a4 24.♘xe8 ♖axe8 25.♖h1, with attack.

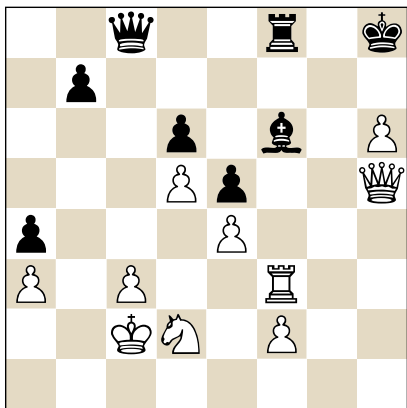
21...♘c7 22.♘xc7 ♖xc7 23.0-0 b5 24.♖xh5 ♙xh5 25.♖xh5 bxc4 26.♖h1

26.♘f3, with the idea ♘h4-g6 mate, was a bit faster.

26...h6



27.♔c2 Safety first. 27.♔g6 c3 28.♞c4! cxb2+ 29.♔xb2 was another road to Rome. **27...c3 28.bxc3 ♖ac8 29.♞h3 f3 30.♙xc8 ♕xc8 31.gxh6 ♙f6 32.♞xf3** And game over.

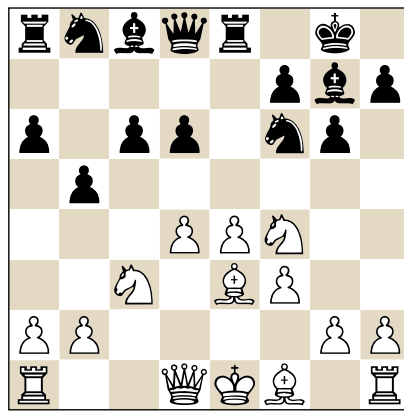


32...♙h7 33.♞g3 ♙h8 34.♔g6 b5 35.♞f3 ♕d8 36.♞f1 b4 37. axb4 a3 38.♔b3 a2 39.♔xa2 ♕a8+ 40.♔b2 ♕a6 41.♞g3 ♕c4 42.♞xf6 ♕xc3+ 43.♔xc3 ♞c8+ 44.♔b3 ♞c3+ 45.♔a4 ♞a3+ 46.♔b5 ♞a5+ 47.♔c6 ♞a6+ 48.♔d7 ♞a7+ 49.♔e6 ♞e7+ 50.♙f5 Black resigned.

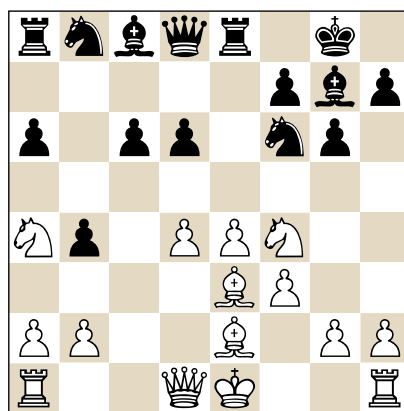
Alexander Grischuk knows how to use his time like no one else. He's a time-trouble junkie and likes to live on the edge. This was the crucial game of the tournament. Somehow Magnus survives, and even wins!

KI 47.1 – E81
Magnus Carlsen
Alexander Grischuk
Dubai rapid 2014 (14)

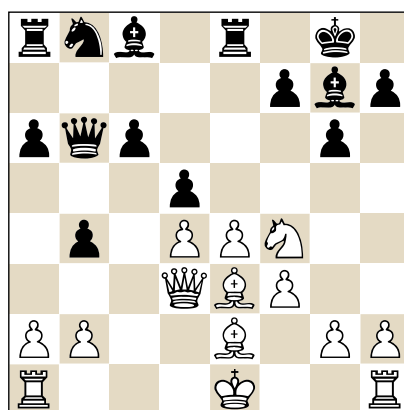
1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♙e3 a6 7.♞ge2 c6 8.c5 b5 9.cxd6 exd6 10.♞f4 ♞e8



11.♙e2 Careless. Better would have been 11.♕d2 or 11.a3. At least it would prevent what is coming now. **11...b4 12.♞a4**



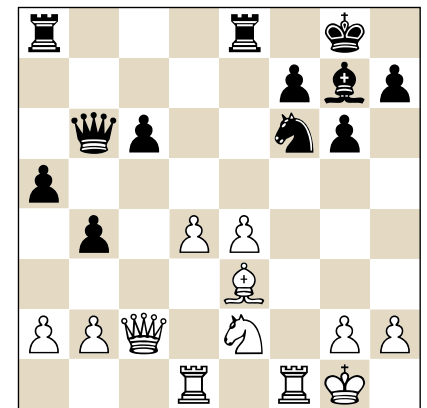
12...♞d5! The idea. **13.♙c1 ♞b6** 13...♞xf4 14.♙xf4 d5 15.e5 f6 would have won a pawn, but not the game. White would have some sort of positional compensation. **14.♞xb6 ♕xb6 15.♙e3 d5 16.♕d3**



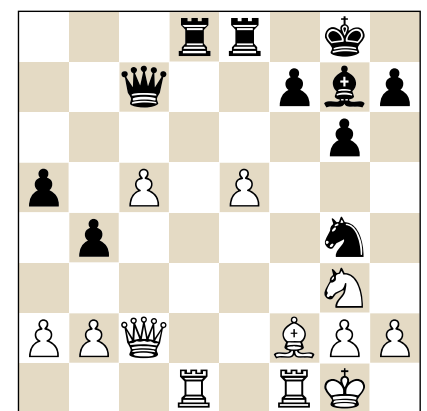
16...dxe4 16...a5 was stronger, not giving White that extra option as in the game: 17.e5 f6 18.♕d2 fxe5 19.dxe5 ♕c7 20.♞d3 ♙xe5 21.♞xe5 ♕xe5 22.♙f2 ♙a6, and Black is better here, but White still has some play. **17.fxe4 a5 18.♞d1?**

18.e5! was the extra option White got now.

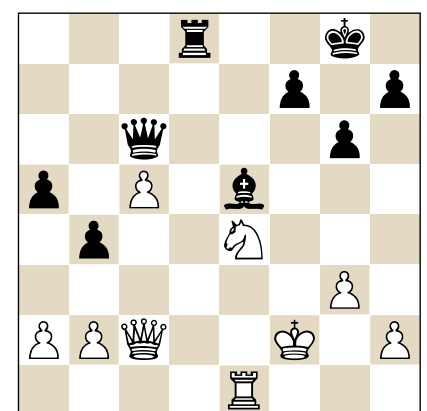
18...♙a6 19.♕c2 ♙xe2 20.♞xe2 ♞d7 21.0-0 ♞f6



22.♞g3? Stronger was 22.♞f4!, when 22...g5?! is met by 23.♞xf6! ♙xf6 24.♞g3, and I am sure now Magnus would have liked his position! **22...♞g4 23.♙f2 ♞ad8 24.e5 c5 25.dxc5 ♕c7**



26.♞xd8 26.e6 also loses: 26...♞xe6 27.♞xd8+ ♕xd8 28.♞d1 ♕e7 29.c6 ♞xf2 30.♙xf2 ♕a7+ 31.♙f1 ♞f6+, etc. **26...♞xd8 27.♞e4 ♙xe5 28.g3 ♞xf2 29.♙xf2 ♕c6 30.♞e1**



30...♙d4+? The wrong move order. 30...f5! was

correct, because now, after **31. ♖f1 f5** White has the quiet knight retreat **32. ♘f2** and suddenly his king has found some shelter.

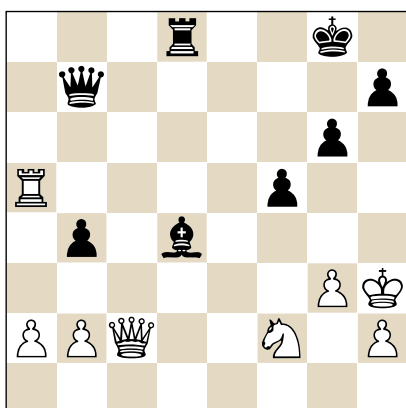
32... ♙xc5

32... ♙xc5 leads to a very good end-game, but it's hard to settle down when you are attacking.

33. ♖e5 ♙a6+ 34. ♖g2

Enough to survive might have been **34. ♙e2!? ♙xe2+ 35. ♖xe2 ♙xf2 36. ♖xf2 ♖d2+ 37. ♖g1 ♖xb2 38. ♖xa5.**

34... ♙b7+ 35. ♖h3 ♙d4 36. ♖xa5



36... ♙b6

From here on the game is definitely turning around. Black's last chance to attack White's king was with **36... f4!**.

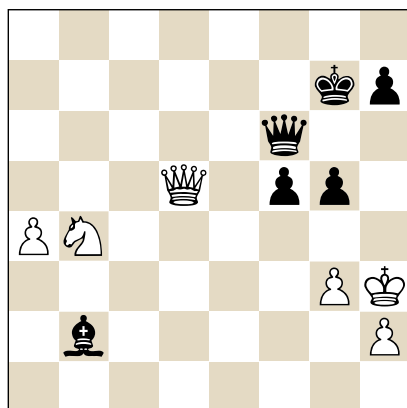
37. ♙c4+ ♖h8 38. ♖b5 ♙f6

39. ♘d3 g5 40. ♖d5 ♖xd5

41. ♙xd5 ♖g7 42. ♘xb4 ♙xb2

43. a4

Objectively speaking, this should be a draw, but Black simply couldn't stop his downfall.



43... f4?!

Opening up the position, but it only

favours White. **43... ♙c3** was the easiest way to make a draw, with ...g4+ coming next.

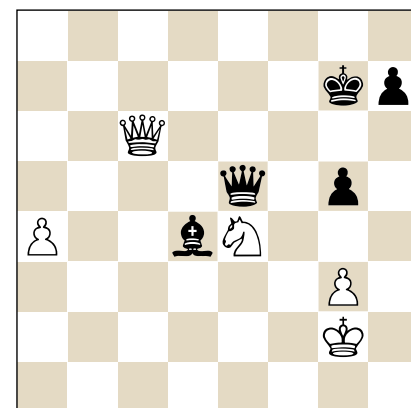
44. ♖g2 ♙c3 45. ♘d3 fxg3 46.

hxg3 ♙e7 47. ♘f2 ♙e5 48. ♙f3

♙d4 49. ♙b7+ ♖g6 50. ♙c6+

♖g7 51. ♘e4

Now some nice piece coordination plus Black being low on time will do the job.



51... h5?!

51... ♙b6!.

52. a5 h4 53. g4



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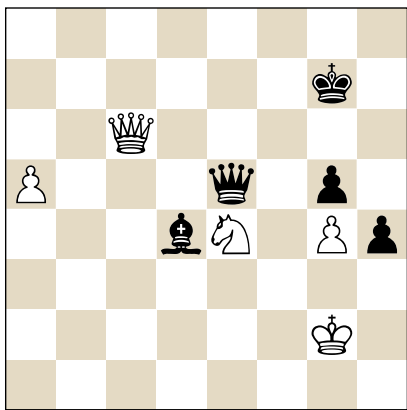
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53...Qe3?

53...Qc5!! was Black's last chance.

54. Qd7+ Kg6 55. Qd6+ Qxd6

56. Qxd6 Qf6 57. a6 Qe6 58. Qb5

Qe5 59. Qf3 Qb6 60. a7 Qxa7

61. Qxa7 Black resigned.

Levon Aronian was one of four players to finish half a point behind Magnus Carlsen. As with Magnus, good moves come easily to him. I don't believe anyone would have stopped him if he had beaten Magnus. He had Magnus on the ropes, but he couldn't find the killer move.

NI 27.5 – D38

Levon Aronian

Magnus Carlsen

Dubai rapid 2014 (11)

1.d4 Qf6 2.c4 e6 3. Qf3 d5 4. Qc3

Qb4 5. Qg5 h6 6. Qxf6 Qxf6 7.e3

0-0 8. Qc1 dxc4 9. Qxc4 c5 10.0-

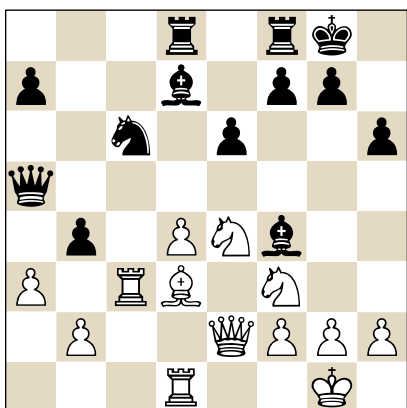
0 cxd4 11. Qe4 Qf5 12. Qg3 Qa5

13.exd4 Qc6 14. Qe2 Qd7 15.a3

Qd6 16. Qe4 Qf4 17. Qc3 Qad8

18. Qd1 Another move was 18.b4.

18...b5 19. Qd3 b4



20. Qc5 This looks natural, but there was something stronger: 20. Qc4! bxa3

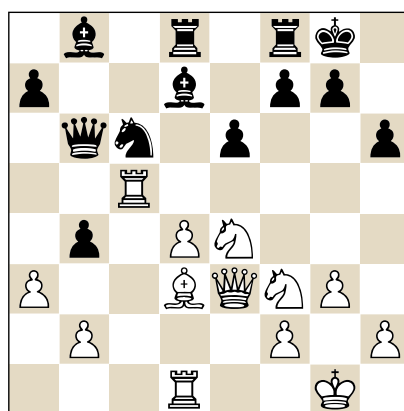


PETER DOGGERS

Levon Aronian had Magnus Carlsen on the ropes, but he couldn't find the killer move, an omission that may have cost him the title.

21. Qc5 (with a triple threat!: Qe4, Qxd7 and Qb7!) 21...a2 22. Qe4 f5 23. Qxf4 a1 Q 24. Qxa1 Qxa1+ 25. Qc1 Qxb2 26. Qxd7, and White should win.

20... Qb6 21.g3 Qb8 22. Qe3



22...f5

I would have played 22...Qe7 here, but then again I would have been mated after 23. Qf6+ Qh8 24. Qh5 (24. Qe4 g6 25. Qe5) 24...Qg8 25. Qxg8 Qxg8 26. Qxh6.

23. Qb5 f4 24. Qc1 Qc7 25. Qc5 fxf3 26. Qe5 gxf2+ 27. Qxf2

Qd6 28. Qxc6 Qxc6 29. Qxc6

bxa3 30.bxa3 Black would have

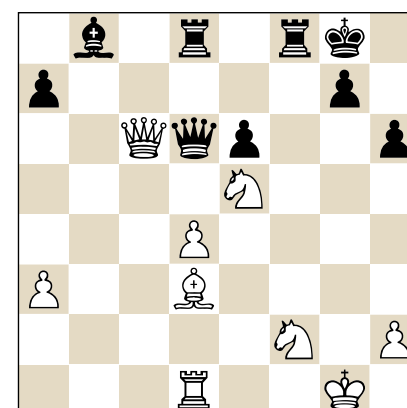
good drawing chances after 30. Qe4

Qf5 31.bxa3 Qxd4 32. Qxd4 Qxd4

33. Qxf5 (33. Qc6 Qxh2+ 34. Qg2

Qxd3 35. Qxd3) 33...Qxd1+ 34. Qxd1

exf5 35. Qc6 Qd6.

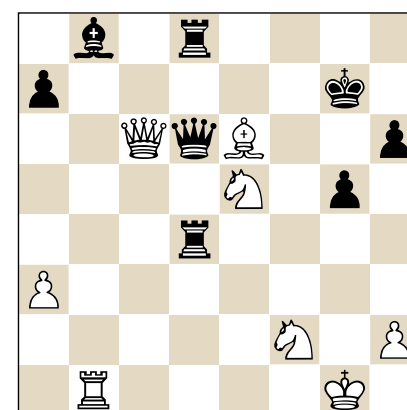


30...Qf4?

30...Qe7 was a forced regrouping. I guess he didn't see White's next move coming.

31. Qc4 g5 32. Qxe6+ Qg7

33. Qb1 Qxd4



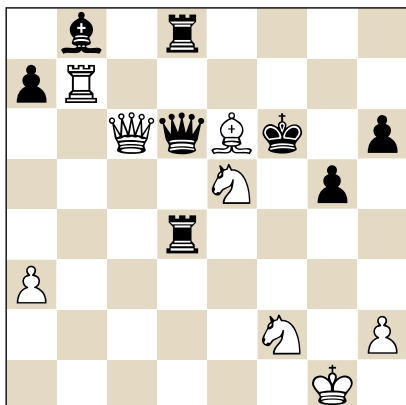
34. Qb7+ Winning *and* the best, but

not the most practical move. That

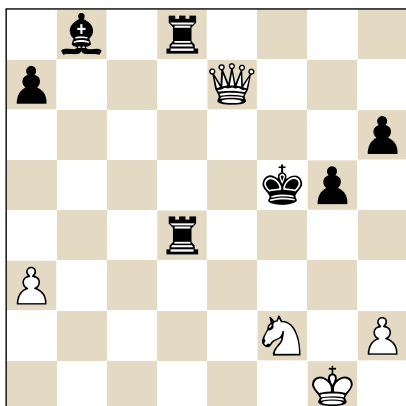
was 34. Qb7+ Qc7 (34...Qc7 35. Qc1)

35. Qc6 Qd1+ 36. Qxd1 Qxd1+

37. ♖xd1 ♜xb7 38. ♖d7+ ♜xd7
39. ♕xd7, with an easy win.
34... ♖f6



35. ♖f3+ Here there was 35. ♕b3!
♜xe5 36. ♖c3!! ♖f8 37. ♖b5+ ♜f6
38. ♖xb8!!, and wins. Shame on Levon
that he missed that! ☺
35... ♜xe6 36. ♖f7+ ♜xe5
37. ♖e7+ ♜xe7 38. ♖xe7+ ♜f5
Although Black's king is exposed,
White cannot really exploit this.



39. ♖h7+ ♜f6 40. ♖xh6+ ♜f5
41. ♖h7+ ♜f6 42. ♖e4+ ♜e5
43. ♖e7+ ♜f5 44. ♖f2 ♕f4
45. ♖xa7 ♜g6 46. ♖b6+ ♖8d6
47. ♖b1+ ♜g7 48. ♖b7+ ♖d7
49. ♖f3 ♖f7 50. ♖c3 ♕xh2+
51. ♜xh2 ♖xf2+ 52. ♜g3 ♖f4 53.
a4 ♖g4+ 54. ♜f3 ♖f4+ 55. ♜g3
♖g4+ 56. ♜f3 ♖f4+

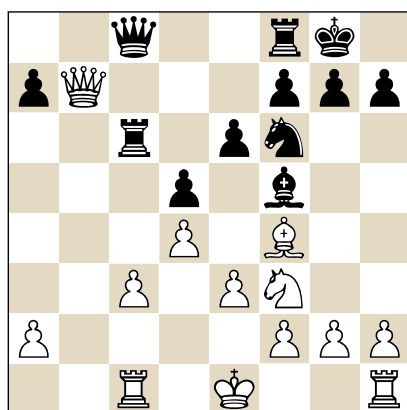
Draw.

Another usual suspect among the runners-up was Vishy Anand. The former World Champion didn't lose a single game and beat Carlsen with Black! He made too many draws, but this result may still give his confidence a boost for the coming World Championship match.

SL 11.14 – D10
Magnus Carlsen
Viswanathan Anand
Dubai rapid 2014 (12)

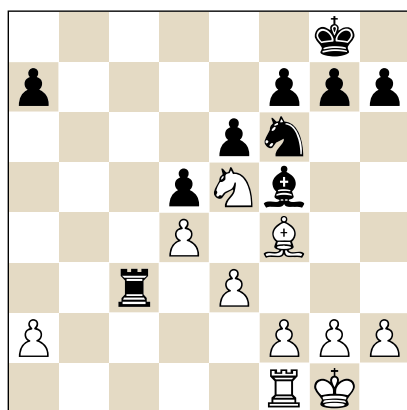
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5 cxd5
4. ♖c3 ♖f6 5. ♕f4 ♖c6 6.e3 ♕f5
7. ♖c1 ♖c8 8. ♖f3 e6 9. ♖b3 ♕b4
10. ♕b5 ♕xc3+ 11. bxc3 0-0
12. ♕xc6 ♖xc6 13. ♖xb7 ♖c8

As usual, Magnus has been shining his light on opening theory, and as a result he is a bit worse on the white side of an Exchange Slav...

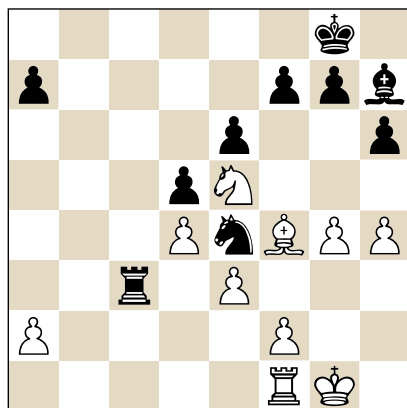


14. ♖xc8 ♖fxc8 15. ♖e5 ♖xc3
16. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 17.0-0

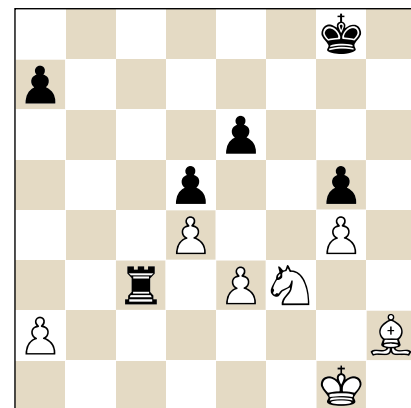
So far so good for Vishy. He has an active rook and controls both the c-file and the b-file.



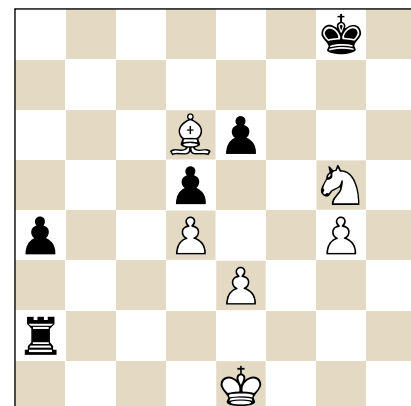
17...h6 18.h4 ♖e4 19.g4 ♕h7



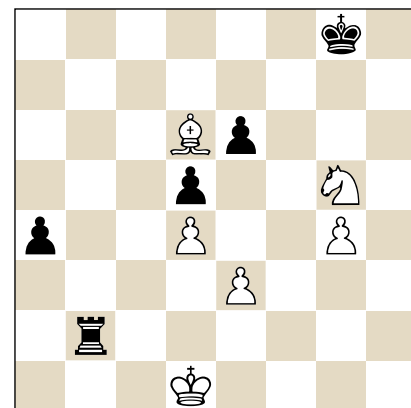
20. ♖b1 However, now Magnus suddenly gets counterplay.
20...g5 21.hxg5 hxg5 22. ♕h2
♖d2 23. ♖b8+ ♜g7 24. ♖b7 ♕e4
25. ♖xf7+ ♜g8 26.f3 ♖xf3+
27. ♖xf3 ♕xf3 28. ♖xf3



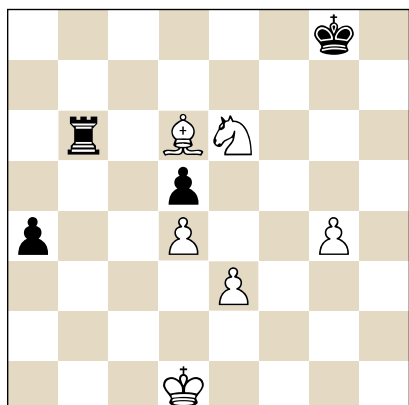
28... ♖c1+ I would have taken on e3,
28... ♖xe3, but then I am not playing for
the world title for the 6th time or so.
29. ♜f2 ♖c2+ 30. ♜e1 ♖xa2
31. ♕d6 a5 32. ♖xg5 a4



33. ♜d1 33. ♖xe6 ♜f7 34. ♖f4 a3
35. ♕xa3 ♖xa3 36. ♖xd5 ♖a2 37. ♖f4
♜f6 38. ♖h3 ♖c2 39. ♜f1 ♜e6 40. ♖f2
♜d5 41. ♜g2 ♖c8 42. ♜f3 ♖f8+
43. ♜e2 ♖a8 44. ♖d3 ♖a3 45. ♖c5
♖a1 should have been a draw, but I
wouldn't fancy being in Vishy's shoes.
33... ♖b2



34. ♖xe6? A blunder, but not a lethal one. The game would end in a draw after 34. ♙c5 ♜b3 35. ♚e2 e5 36. dxe5 a3. **34... ♜b6**



35. ♖f4?

But this one is. 35. ♙c2 a3 36. ♙xa3 ♜xe6 37. ♙d2! should still have drawn pretty comfortably.

35... ♜xd6 36. ♙c2 ♜b6 37. ♖xd5 ♜b7 38. ♖c3 a3 39. e4 ♖f7 40. e5 ♙e6 41. ♙c1 ♜c7 42. ♙d2 ♜a7 43. ♖a2 ♜b7 44. ♙c3 ♜b8 45. g5 ♙f5 46. d5 ♙xe5 47. g6 ♙xd5 48. g7 ♙e6 49. g8 ♙+ ♜xg8 50. ♙b3 ♜g3+ 51. ♙b4 ♙e5 52. ♖c3 ♜e3 53. ♙c4 ♙f5 54. ♙b4 ♙g4 55. ♖a2 ♙f3 56. ♖c3 ♙g2 57. ♖d5 ♜f3 58. ♖c3 ♙f1 59. ♙c4 ♙e1 60. ♙b4 ♜h3 White resigned. Vishy, there is still hope!

Fabiano Caruana is one of the hardest fighters around, but he is not as tricky (or practical) as the others. That may have cost him the title. He may find some consolation in the fact that his shared second place got him into first place in the rapid world rankings, leaving Magnus something to aim for in the near future. If Fabiano thinks back about where he may have left some points, I suggest he take a look at this game again.

RL 7.1 – C65

**Fabiano Caruana
Levon Aronian**

Dubai rapid 2014 (14)

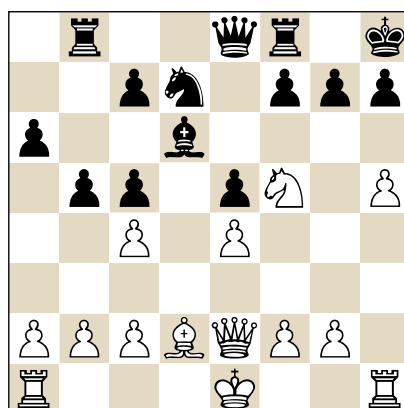
1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♙b5 ♖f6 4. d3 ♙c5 5. ♙xc6 dxc6 6. ♖bd2 ♙e6 7. ♖b3 ♙d6 8. ♖a5 ♜b8



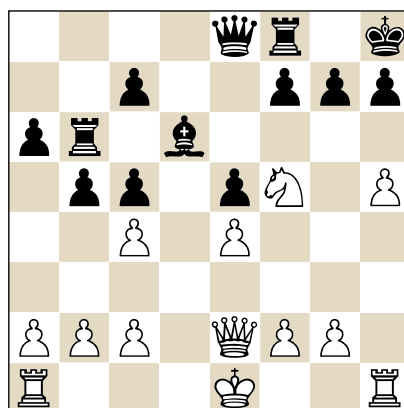
PETER DOGGERS

Vishy Anand didn't lose a single game and beat Magnus Carlsen with Black. The Challenger made too many draws, but still his result must have given him a boost for the coming match.

9. ♙e2 0-0 10. ♙d2 c5 11. ♖c4 ♙xc4 12. dxc4 ♖d7 13. h4 a6 14. h5 b5 15. ♖h4 ♙e8 16. ♖f5 ♙h8



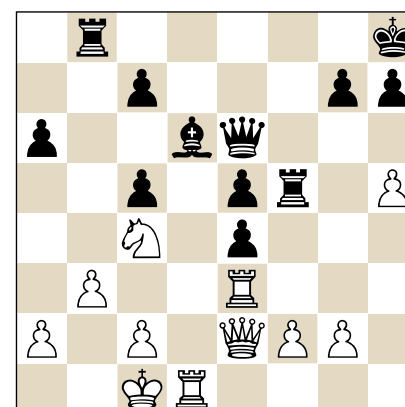
17. ♙a5 Understandable, but not necessary. Better was 17. 0-0-0, because 17... ♖b6? doesn't work anyway: 18. ♙g4 ♜g8 19. h6 g6 20. ♙g5. **17... ♖b6 18. ♙xb6 ♜xb6**



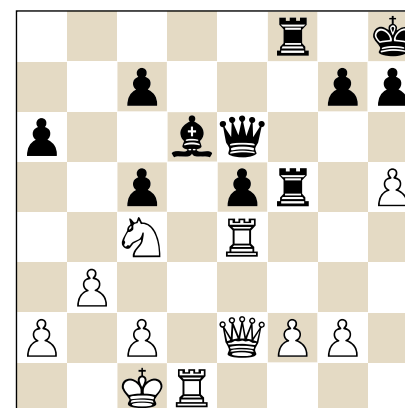
19. 0-0-0?! 19. ♙g4 ♜g8 20. ♖e3, and White remains in full control. **19... ♙e6 20. ♜h3** Better was 20. ♙g4, to challenge

Black's queen on e6 right away: 20... ♜g8 21. ♖e3.

20... ♙xc4 21. ♖e3 c3 22. b3 ♜bb8 23. ♖c4 f5 24. ♜xc3 fxe4 25. ♜e3 ♜f5



26. ♜xe4 Still, Black's position looks positionally completely lost after 26. g4. **26... ♜bf8**

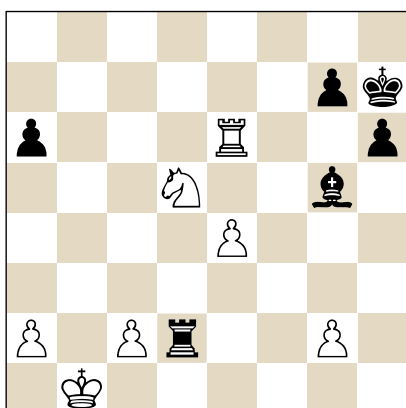


27. f3 At least now Black has a pawn for his suffering. Another possibility was 27. ♖xd6 cxd6 28. ♙xa6 ♜d8 29. ♙b6 ♙f6 30. ♙b1

xf2 31. fxe5, and White should be winning.

27... fxf5 28. e3 c8 29. b1 f5 30. f1 f4 31. d3 h6 32. d1 b7 33. d2 fxe4 34. fxe4 g3 35. e2 h7 36. d2 b4 37. d1 g6 38. c4 b8 39. f2 e8 40. e2 e6 41. e3 e7 42. d5 g5 43. xc7 c6 44. d5 c4 45. xc4 xc4 46. bxc4 c6 47. f5 fxc4 48. fxe5 d4 49. e6 d2

Slowly but surely White has been losing the thread of the game.



50. g4? After 50. c4! White would still be well coordinated to start the pawn race. 50... f2 51. fxa6? This pawn is rather useless. 51... f4 52. e5 h5 53. e6 h4 54. e7 f4 55. b2 e7 56. c6 b4 57. c3 e7 58. c2 h3 59. b6 f1 White resigned.

Sergey Karjakin shared sixth place with five others, one point behind Carlsen, which was good for \$7,667 each. Karjakin recently got married, so you'd be tempted to say basically: case closed. On the other hand, he did find a nugget immediately after his marriage in Stavanger! His rapid encounter with Magnus was highly entertaining.

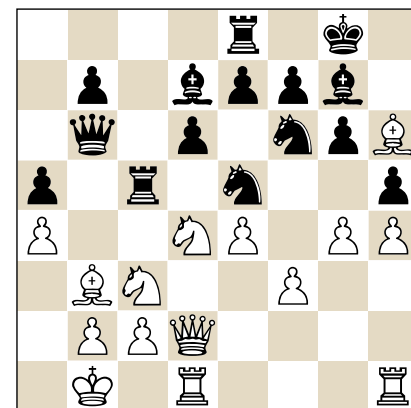
SI 18.12 – B78

Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen

Dubai rapid 2014 (6)

1. e4 c5 2. f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4
4. xd4 f6 5. c3 g6 6. e3

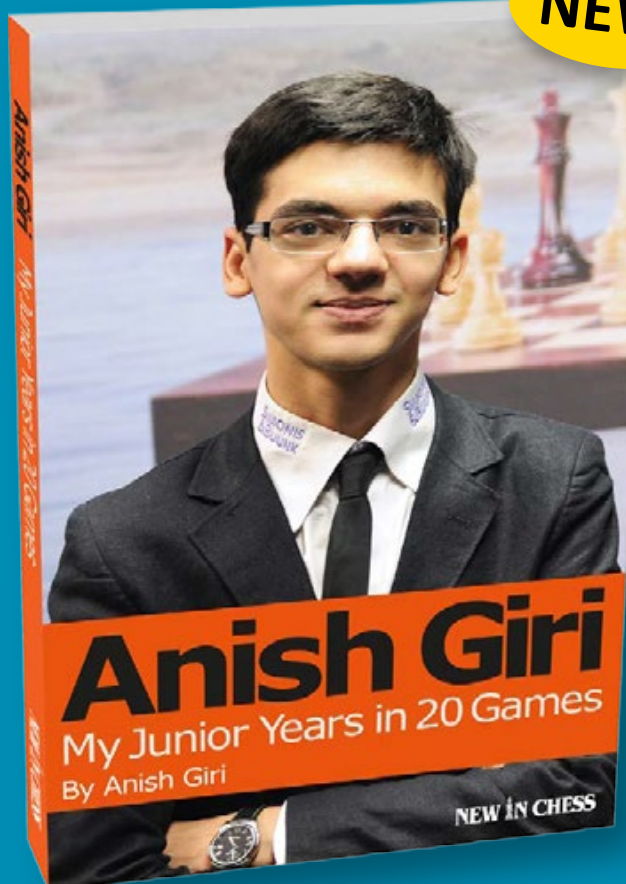
g7 7. f3 c6 8. d2 0-0 9. c4 d7 10. h4 h5 11. 0-0-0 e5 12. b3 c8 13. g5 c5 14. b1 e8 15. h6 a5 16. a4 b6 17. g4
Now the party is starting!



17... fxc3 Standard. 18. bxc3 xf3
And a good follow-up. 19. xf3
xe4 20. d3 xc3+ 21. c1
xh6+ 22. g5

Let's take stock for a moment: Black has gotten his invested material back, and even more than that, but now he has some issues on f7 and g6.

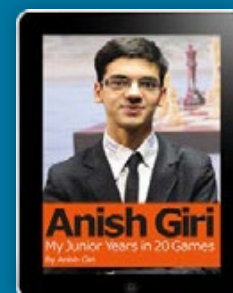
NEW!



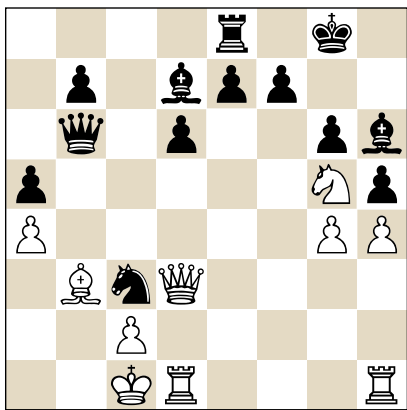
On the 28th of June 2014 Anish Giri lost his position as the leading junior player in the FIDE world rankings. What happened? That day he turned 20 and stopped being a Junior. His sights are now set on higher goals.

In this games collection, the young Dutch grandmaster sketches his rise to the chess elite and presents 20 fondly remembered games in his trademark style: instructive, witty and delightfully unimpressed by reputations.

This book is also available in digital interactive format in the New In Chess magazine app. Subscribers to **New In Chess digital** will receive this tablet edition **for FREE**.



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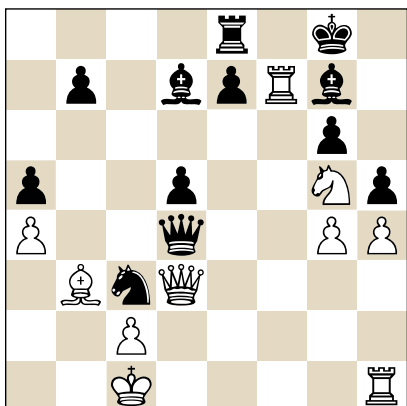
22...♙g7 23.♖df1?!

After 23. ♙xf7+ ♔h8 24. ♖xg6 Black is forced to give perpetual check: 24... ♖e3+ 25. ♖d2 ♘e2+ 26. ♖b1 ♘c3+ 27. ♖c1.

23...d5 Not the best.

After 23... ♙xg4! 24. ♖xf7 ♘e2+ 25. ♖b1 (on 25. ♖xe2 Black should go 25... ♖xb3! – and not 25... ♙xe2?? 26. ♖f8+ ♔xf8 27. ♘h7 mate) 25...d5 26. ♖e1 ♘d4 Black has the initiative.

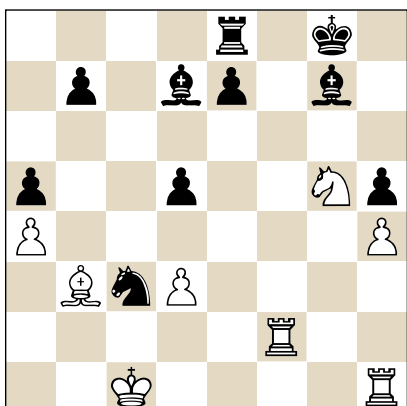
24.♖xf7 ♖d4



25.gxh5

The resulting endgame is not so simple, which is why I prefer 25. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 26. ♖f1 ♖f8 27. ♙xd5+ ♘xd5 28. ♖xd5+ e6 29. ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 30. ♖d6+ ♖e7 31. ♖e5, and the game should end in a draw.

25...♖xd3 26.cxd3 gxh5 27.♖f2



27...♙d4

27...b5! was Magnus's last big chance. He probably preferred winning the pawn on a4 to exchanging it. Suddenly he became too greedy in the Dragon!

28.♖c2

It's still a bit better for Magnus, but Sergey is a tough defender and after 58 moves it was a draw.

Peter Svidler assembled the same number of points and dollars as Karjakin. I have always considered Peter to be a natural talent. Good moves always came and come easy to him. Unfortunately, chess sometimes requires some calculation.

In his game against the young and dangerous Yu Yangyi, Peter thought he had tricked his opponent, but he had probably missed a counter-trick.

SI 40.2 – B48

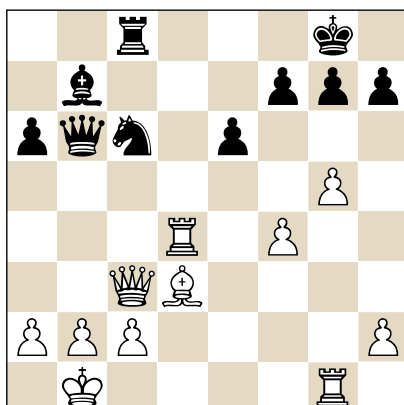
Yu Yangyi

Peter Svidler

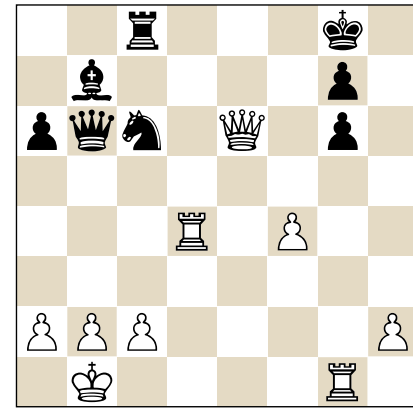
Dubai rapid 2014 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♖c7 6.♙e3 a6 7.♖d2 ♘f6 8.0-0-0 ♙e7 9.f4 b5 10.e5 b4 11.exf6 bxc3 12.♖xc3 ♙xf6 13.g4 ♙b7 14.g5 ♙xd4 15.♖xd4 ♖c8 16.♖a4 0-0 17.♖g1 d5 18.♖b1 ♖fd8 19.♙d3 d4 20.♙xd4 ♖xd4 21.♖xd4 ♖b6

That was Peter's idea; not only attacking the rook on d4, but also eyeing the one on g1. However, there is a little flaw.



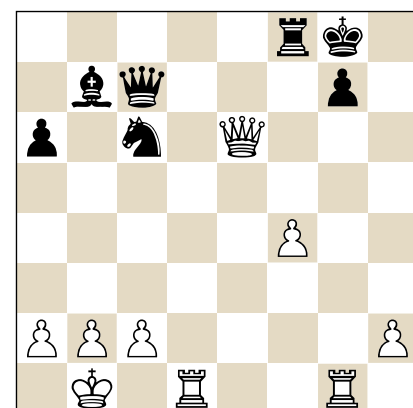
22. ♙xh7+! ♔xh7 23.g6+ fxg6 24. ♖h3+ ♔g8 25. ♖xe6+



25...♙f8 As 25...♙h8 26.♖g3 mates.

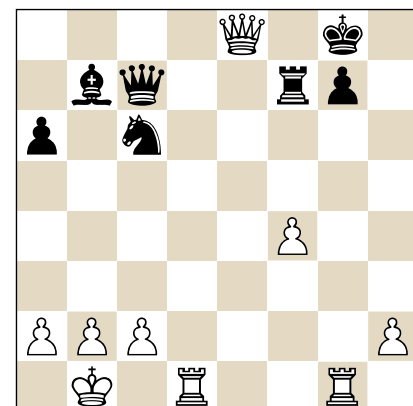
26.♖d6+ ♔g8 27.♖dd1 ♖f8

28.♖xg6 ♖c7 29.♖e6+



29...♖f7 To give you an idea:

29... ♖f7 30. ♖d7 ♖xe6 31. ♖gxg7+, with mate to follow. 30. ♖e8+



30... ♔h7 30... ♖f8 31. ♖d7 ♖xe8 32. ♖xc7 ♖e7 33. ♖xe7 ♘xe7 34.c4 results in a hopeless endgame.

31. ♖d3 ♙c8 32. ♖d5 g6 33. ♖h5+ Black resigned.

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov was the defending champ. Shakh is dangerous and tricky. He can beat anyone, but he also lacks stability. What do you do when you meet a better coffee-house player than yourself? Houston, we have a problem!



Make your best move!

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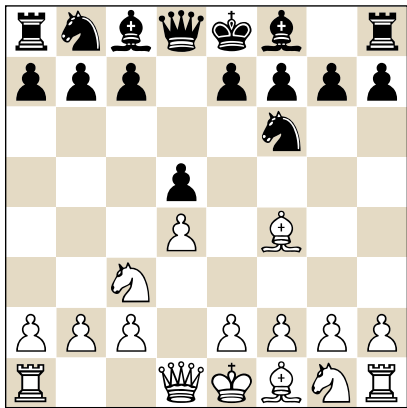
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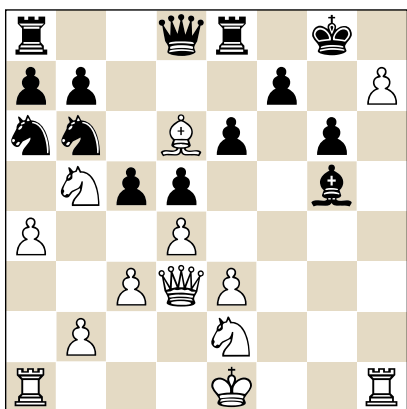
QP 10.7 – D00

Baadur Jobava
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
 Dubai rapid 2014 (3)

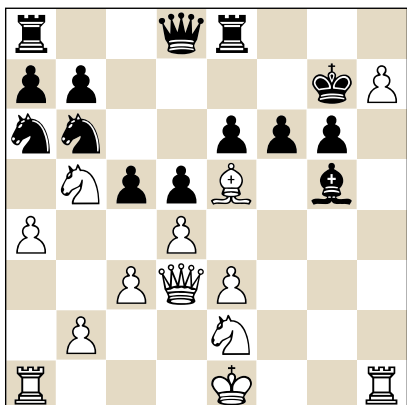
1.d4 ♖f6 **2.♗c3 d5 3.♙f4** Baadur's pet line, with which he is very successful. He is trying to make Morozevich look like a conventional player!



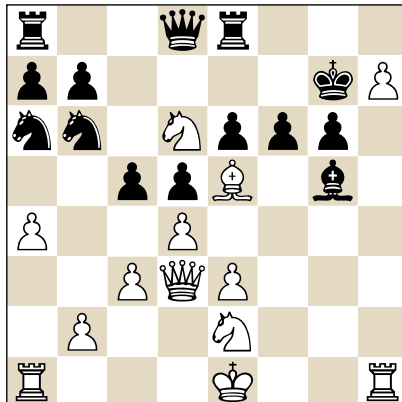
3...♙f5 4.f3 e6 5.g4 ♙g6 6.h4 h6 7.e3 c5 8.h5 ♙h7 9.♗b5 ♗a6 10.c3 ♙e7 11.♙d3 ♙xd3 12.♙xd3 ♗d7 13.♗e2 0-0 14.a4 ♙f6 15.♙d6 ♗e8 16.f4 ♗b6 17.g5 hxg5 18.h6 Chess is easy; just go forward! **18...g6 19.fxg5 ♙xg5 20.h7+**



20...♙g7 20...♙h8 was no better: 21.♙e5+ f6 22.♗d6 ♗f8 23.♙f4, and Black is lost. **21.♙e5+ f6**



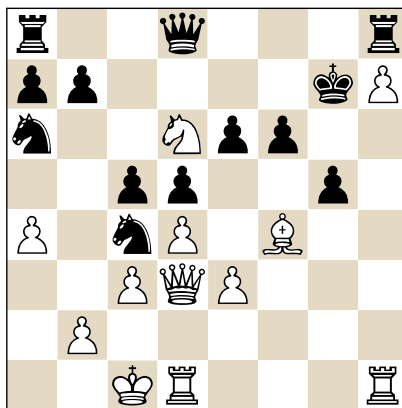
22.♗d6 Even stronger was 22.♗f4! ♙xf4 23.♙xf4 g5 24.0-0-0!, with a killing attack.



22...♗h8?

Instead, 22...fxe5 23.♗xe8+ ♗xe8 24.h8 ♗+ ♗xh8 25.♗xh8 ♗xh8 would have given Black good chances to save his skin.

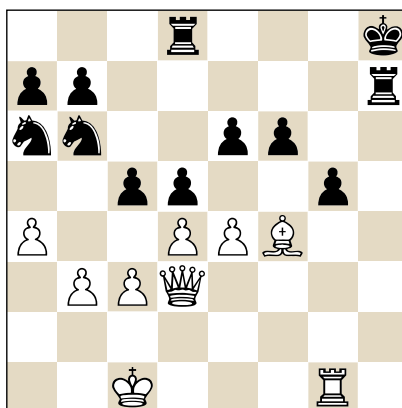
23.♗f4 ♙xf4 24.♙xf4 g5 25.0-0-0 ♗c4



26.♗h6!? Excessive violence alert!

26.♗xc4 dxc4 27.♗c2 was probably too mundane or too simple for Baadur.

26...♙xh6 27.♗f7+ ♙g7 28.♗xd8 ♗axd8 29.b3 ♗b6 30.♗g1 ♗xh7 31.e4 ♙h8



32.e5 gxf4 33.♗g6 ♗f8 34.exf6 Black resigned.

Dubai 2014 Rapid World Championship

1	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2827	11
2	Fabiano Caruana	ITA	2840	10½
3	Vishy Anand	IND	2770	10½
4	Levon Aronian	ARM	2785	10½
5	Alexander Morozevich	RUS	2732	10½
6	Evgeny Tomashevsky	RUS	2693	10
7	Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2781	10
8	Alexander Grischuk	RUS	2828	10
9	Teimour Radjabov	AZE	2750	10
10	Peter Svidler	RUS	2787	10
11	Etienne Bacrot	FRA	2692	10
12	Yu Yangyi	CHN	2668	9½
13	Rauf Mamedov	AZE	2705	9½
14	Baadur Jobava	GEO	2688	9
15	Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son	VIE	2660	9
16	Eduardo Iturrizaga	VEN	2652	9
17	Sergei Movsesian	ARM	2696	9
18	Gadir Guseinov	AZE	2671	9
19	Le Quang Liem	VIE	2724	9
20	Zahar Efimenko	UKR	2677	9
21	Wang Hao	CHN	2716	9
22	Pavel Eljanov	UKR	2716	9
23	Mikhail Antipov	RUS	2576	9
24	Ian Nepomniachtchi	RUS	2768	8½
25	Laurent Fressinet	FRA	2681	8½
26	Sergey Yudin	RUS	2626	8½
27	Ivan Salgado	ESP	2630	8½
28	Alexander Riazantsev	RUS	2597	8½
29	Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2841	8½
30	Mateusz Bartel	POL	2593	8½
31	Arkadij Naiditsch	GER	2687	8½
32	Georg Meier	GER	2677	8½
33	Francisco Vallejo	ESP	2709	8½
34	Maxim Matlakov	RUS	2649	8½
35	Alexander Moiseenko	UKR	2699	8½
36	Nikita Vitiugov	RUS	2708	8½
37	Vladimir Fedoseev	RUS	2656	8½
38	Sergei Zhigalko	BLR	2679	8½
39	Ivan Cheparinov	BUL	2727	8½
40	Loek van Wely	NED	2674	8
41	Daniil Dubov	RUS	2624	8
42	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	2749	8
43	Evgeny Najer	RUS	2657	8
44	Yuriy Kryvoruchko	UKR	2694	8
45	Ahmed Adly	EGY	2634	8
46	Vladimir Potkin	RUS	2682	8
47	Gabriel Sargissian	ARM	2665	8
48	Alexey Dreev	RUS	2709	8
49	Markus Ragger	AUT	2701	8
50	Lu Shanglei	CHN	2536	8

113 players, 15 rounds

Which takes us back to Magnus Carlsen, the new champ. The happy winner annotates his win against Ernesto Inarkiev, in which he used an old piece of advice of his former trainer Simen Agdestein.

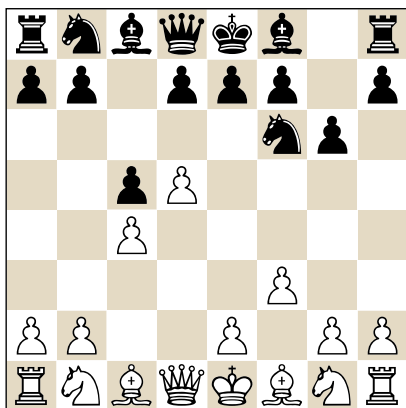


NOTES BY
Magnus Carlsen

Bl 6.14 – A65
Magnus Carlsen
Ernesto Inarkiev
Dubai rapid 2014 (5)

This game was played in the fifth and last round of the first day of the rapid. So far I had 3 out of 4, having drawn my Black games and won my White games. My last game, as Black against Tomashevsky, had been rather complicated and difficult, so I was hoping for simple and instructive in this one.

1.d4 **2.c4** **3.f3** **4.d5**



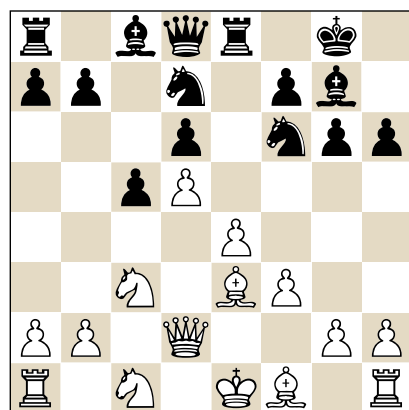
Simen Agdestein taught me as a kid that the Benoni is a bad opening and that the Sämisch is the best way to meet it. After years of rebellion I decided to follow his advice.

4...d6 **5.e4** **6.g7** **7.c3**

The patzer way of playing this line. After being humiliated in a few training games, I decided $\text{N}e2-c3$ was indeed too sophisticated for me.

6...0-0 **7.g5** **8.h6** **9.e3** **10.e6** **11.d2** **12.exd5** **13.cxd5** **14.e8** **15.ge2** **16.bd7** **17.c1**

With ...h5 coming soon, it made little sense to put the knight on g3.

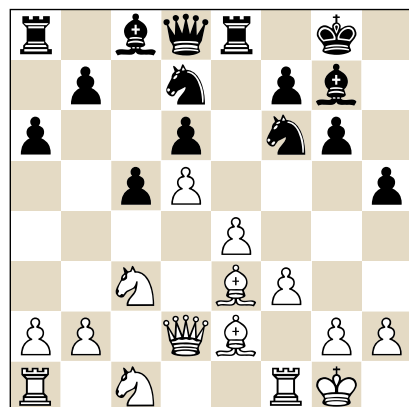


12...a6

12... $\text{N}xe4$ 13. $\text{N}xe4$ $\text{Q}e7$ 14. $\text{Q}f2$ f5 15. $\text{N}c3$ f4 16. $\text{Q}xf4$ $\text{Q}d4+$ 17. $\text{Q}g3$ g5 would have been fun.

13. $\text{Q}e2$ Most people play a4 here or on the next move, and probably with good reason.

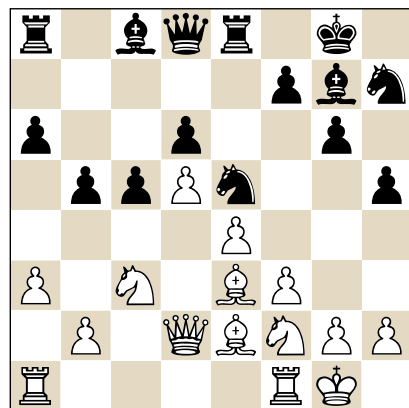
13...h5 14.0-0



14...h7

14...b5 would have been the most natural, and probably best move, when 15.a3 h4 16.b4 runs into 16... $\text{N}xd5!$.

15. $\text{N}d3$ $\text{N}e5$ 16. $\text{N}f2$ b5 17.a3



17...b8?

My opponent told me after the game that he had assumed that 17.a3 was a waiting move, and decided to make a useful move himself.

17... $\text{N}c4$ 18. $\text{Q}xc4$ bxc4 was called

‘After being humiliated in a few training games, I decided $\text{N}e2-c3$ was indeed too sophisticated for me.’

for, with good counterplay down the b-file.

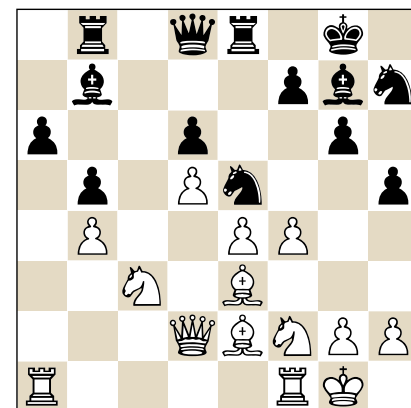
18.b4 Now, however, Black will be left without prospects.

18...cxb4

18... $\text{Q}c7$ 19. bxc5 dxc5 20.f4, followed by e5, was clearly out of the question.

19.axb4 **20.b7** **20.f4?!**

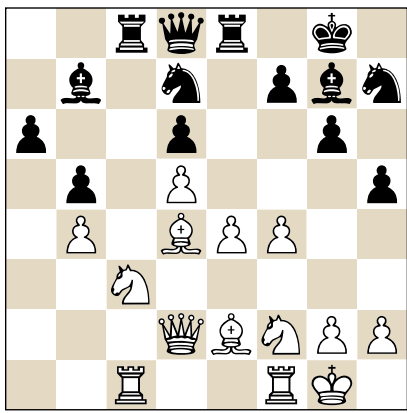
I was not so sure about this one, as I give him a target on e4, but I felt that I would have to kick his knight at some point to make real progress. But more importantly, it fails tactically.



20... $\text{N}d7$ Missing 20... $\text{N}c4$ 21. $\text{Q}xc4$ $\text{Q}c8!$ (21...bxc4 22. $\text{Q}a7$ $\text{Q}a8$ 23. $\text{Q}d4$ is completely uninspiring for Black) 22. $\text{N}xb5$ $\text{Q}xa1$ 23. $\text{Q}d3$ $\text{Q}g7$ 24. $\text{N}a7$, and while the comp claims that White will still emerge on top, this was obviously the way to go.

21. $\text{Q}d4$ $\text{Q}c8$ 22. $\text{Q}ac1$

I hesitated (relatively speaking, of course, since this was a rapid game) a bit around here, as it was hard to figure out how to arrange my pieces in the best way. Obviously White is much better, with an imposing centre, but Black is still quite solid.



22... ♖hf6

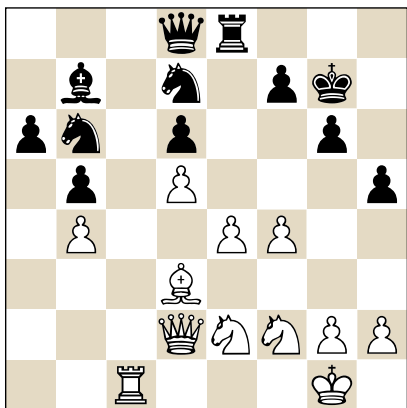
If 22... ♕xd4 23. ♖xd4 ♖b6 24. ♖d2! ♖hf6 25. ♖h1, and with f5 coming, the black king does not feel comfortable.

23. ♕d3 ♖b6 24. ♖e2 ♖xc1 25. ♖xc1 ♖fd7 26. ♕xg7 ♖xg7

PETER DOGGERS



Playing Sealball again? Only Vladimir Potkin, Loek van Wely, Peter Heine Nielsen, Magnus Carlsen or Ian Nepomniachtchi could tell you.

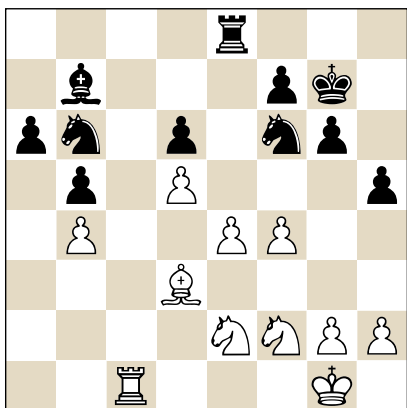


27. ♖b2+?

A hasty decision.

Called for was 27. ♖d4 ♖f6 28. ♕f1 ♖c8 29. ♖c6, and it is just a matter of time before White will break through.

27... ♖f6 28. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6



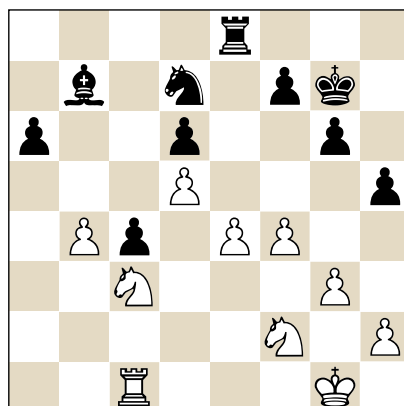
29.g3 29. ♖c7 was my intention, of course: 29... ♕xd5! (not too hard to see, and surely what he had been counting on) 30. exd5 ♖bxd5 31. ♖c2 ♖xb4 32. ♖d2 ♖e3. I briefly considered going for this, but I felt that it

seemed that even in the best-case scenario there would not be too many winning chances here.

29... ♖c4 30. ♕xc4 bxc4 31. ♖c3

31. ♖xc4 runs into 31... ♕xd5!.

31... ♖d7 ...f5 is coming, and again it is not so easy to find the best piece arrangement.



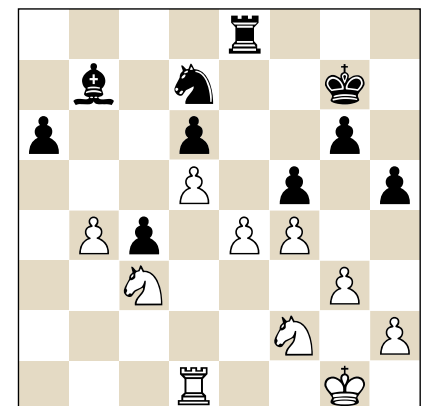
32. ♖d1 32. ♖g2 would have been the most natural move, but it bothered me that Black would be able to put his knight on f6: 32... f5 33. ♖f3 ♖f6 34. ♖d1 fxe4+ 35. ♖fxe4 (35. ♖e3 would possibly have been quite good, but never crossed my mind), and now Black strikes with 35... ♖xe4! 36. ♖xe4 ♕xd5.

32... f5?!

Natural, but it falls right into my plans.

32... ♖a8! worried me more: 33. ♖g2 (33. ♖a1 f5 and his knight goes to f6,

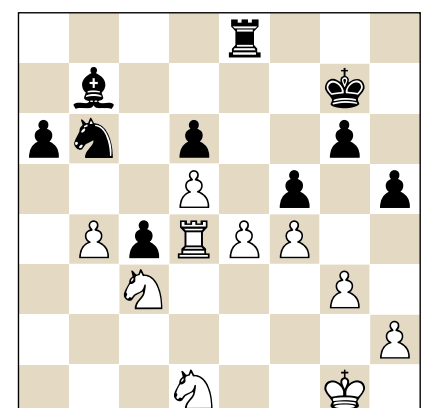
with counterplay) 33... a5 34. ♖b1 axb4 35. ♖xb4 ♕a6, with more drawing chances than in the game.



33. ♖d4 Now I force his knight to b6, where it protects c4 but cannot attack e4, which enables me to start the coming manoeuvre.

33... ♖b6 34. ♖fd1!

Now everything falls into place again.



34... fxe4?!

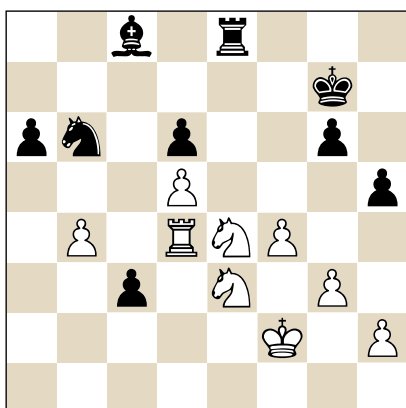
Objectively, a poor move, but 34...♔f6 35.♘e3 ♖c8 36.♔f2 is also very unpleasant for Black. He is forced to wait passively while I can improve my position and then go for either h3-g4 or b5.

35.♘e3 ♖c8 36.♔f2!

In slight mutual time-trouble I calculated that there was nothing for Black here, and I will simply gobble up at least one more pawn.

36...c3 37.♔f2

He spent his remaining time trying to find something, but I have everything under control.

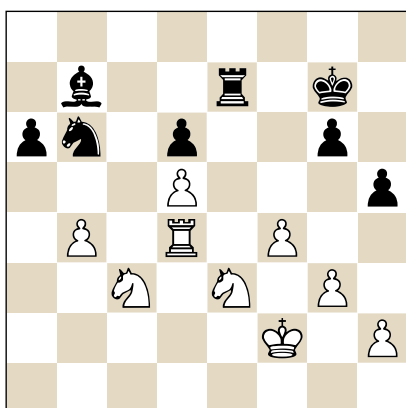


37...♙b7 Also hopeless were 37...c2 38.♘xc2 ♙f5 39.♘xd6 ♙xc2 40.♘xe8+ and 37...♙f5 38.♘xd6 ♖d8 39.♘dxf5+ gxf5 40.♔e2.

The one he had been counting on was 37...♘xd5, but after 38.♘xd5 c2 39.♖c4 ♖xe4 40.♖xc8! White wins in all lines.

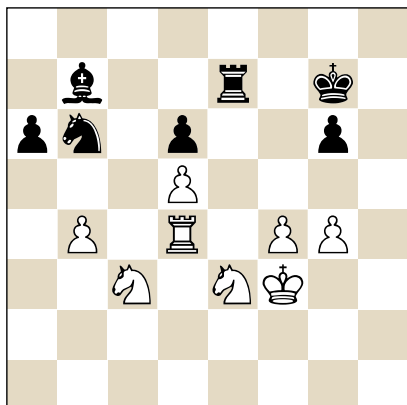
38.♘xc3 ♖e7 A little trap.

38...♖c8 39.♔e4 is pointless.



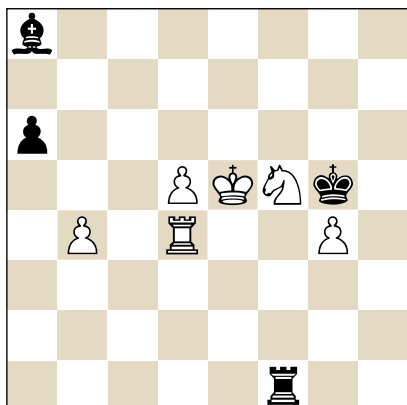
39.h3 39.♔e4 ♘xd5 40.♘xd5 ♙xd5 would have seriously complicated the win. The point of 38...♖e7 is that the black rook will not be attacked after 41.♘xd6 now.

39...♙a8 40.g4 hxg4 41.hxg4 ♙b7 42.♔f3 Preparing ♔e4, activating my pieces even further.



42...♖c7 43.♔e4 ♘c8 44.f5 gxf5 The pawn could not be tolerated on f6, so Black has to lose another pawn.

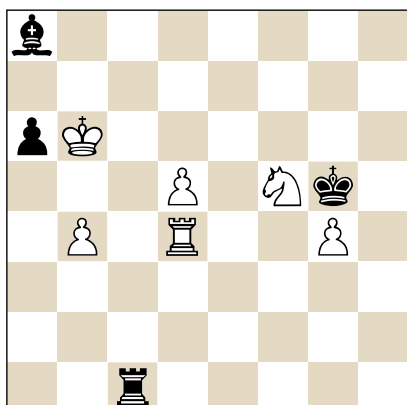
45.♘xf5+ ♔g6 46.♘exd6 ♘xd6 47.♘xd6 ♙a8 48.♔f4 ♖c1 49.♘f5 ♖f1+ 50.♔e5 ♔g5



51.♔d6 I only had to keep my hand from playing 51.d6 ♖e1+, with an unexpected and pretty mate.

51...♖b1 52.♔c5 ♖c1+ 53.♔b6

Going after the poor bishop on a8, which never found a home in this game.



53...♖c8 54.d6 ♖b8+ 55.♔c7 ♖b7+ 56.♔c8 Black resigned.

Let's Blitz

Three days and 15 rounds of rapid were followed by two days and 21 games of blitz. And again Magnus Carlsen emerged victorious, scoring 17 from 21, taking his grand total of world titles to three and pocketing another \$40,000. Carlsen finished a full point ahead of Ian Nepomniachtchi (silver) and Hikaru Nakamura (bronze).

Ian Nepomniachtchi is undoubtedly a gifted player, but he was visibly upset when he got neutralized by an unidentified German GM. I believe he still hasn't got over it. (Nevertheless, after he lost to Georg Meier in Round 11, Nepomniachtchi fought back with six wins in a row, with Wang Hao, Anand and Mamedyarov amongst his victims! – ed.)

His first loss in the tournament, in Round 8, was a crucial one, if only for the name of his opponent. The Russian was doing well, missed his chances and then went under.

FR 4.4 – C11

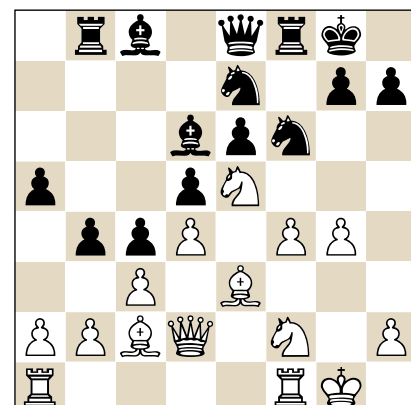
Ian Nepomniachtchi

Hikaru Nakamura

Dubai blitz 2014 (8)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 ♖b8 8.♙d2 a6 9.♙e2 b5 10.♘d1 f5 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♘f2 c4 13.0-0 ♙d6 14.♘e5 ♘e7 15.g4 0-0 16.c3 b4 17.♙d1 a5 18.♙c2 ♙e8

It looks as if White has a nice position, but things are far from simple.



19.♖ae1

Maybe it would have been better to

clear some issues on the queenside with 19.a3 or 19.a4.

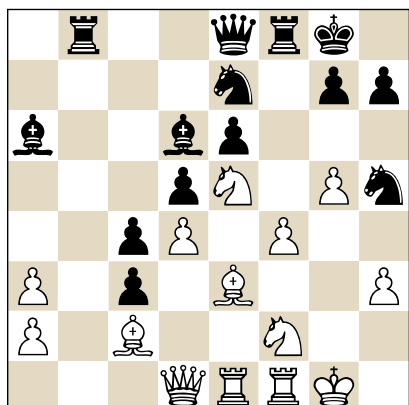
19...a4 20.h3 ♖a6 21. ♔d1 a3

White's queenside is about to collapse, so now he has to go all out.

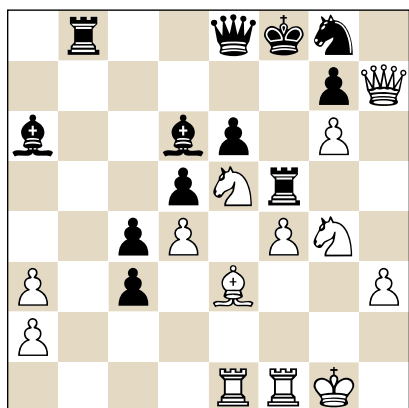
22.bxa3 bxc3 23.g5 ♘h5?

Allowing White's next shot.

After 23...♘d7 there would have been no tricks in sight for Nepo.



**24. ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 25.g6+ ♔g8
26. ♖xh5 ♖f5 27. ♖h7+ ♔f8
28. ♖fg4 ♖g8**



29. ♕f2?

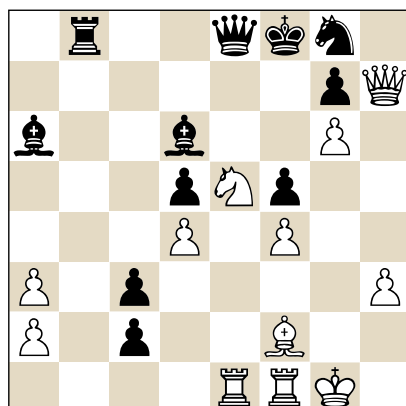
In order to win this kind of game, you have to keep the fire burning.

29.♕f7! contains some nasty ideas: 29...♕c7 (29...♖e7 30.♖g5 – attacking e6 – 30...♕c8 31.♖h8 – threatening ♖h7+ – 31...♖e8 32.♖e5 ♕xe5 33.dxe5, and ♕c5+ is coming with deadly force) 30.♖fh6! gxh6 31.♖xh6 ♖xh6 32.g7+ ♔e7 33.g8♖+, and wins.

29...c2

Now it's Black who is back in control again. My engine now suggests 30.♕e3. I guess 29.♕f2 wasn't Nepo's finest moment.

30. ♖e3 c3! 31. ♖xf5 exf5



32. ♖c4? 32.♖h5 ♖c8 (32...♖h6 33.♖f7) 33.♖f3 was still a good try to start fishing, but clearly Nepo wasn't taking his chances in this game.

32...♖d7 33. ♖xd6 ♕xf1 34. ♖xf1 ♖b1 35. ♕e3 ♖xd6 35...♖xe1+ 36. ♔xe1 ♖e6 37. ♔f2 ♖xe3+ 38. ♔xe3 c1♖+ was a bit stronger.

36.a4 Passed pawns have to be pushed, a lesson that Nepo clearly hadn't missed ☺.

36...♖xe1+ 37. ♔xe1 ♖e6 38. ♔f2 ♖xe3+ 39. ♔xe3 c1♖+ 40. ♔f3 ♖d1+ White resigned.

Hikaru Nakamura came to Dubai with great ambitions, hoping to win at least one world title. He even declined to play in Norway Chess, as he believed the couple of days between the events were not enough to be fully fit for the challenge. Instead, he played a friendly match against David Navara in Prague that he won 3½-½.

CATHY ROGERS



Ian Nepomniachtchi (aka 'young Russian player sporting a Dota 2 t-shirt'), who visibly felt at home in Dubai, came close to winning the World Blitz title.

After his failure in the rapid, the blitz went much better, but it was still too much of a rollercoaster and too many things went wrong.

In the following game, both Shakhriyar and Hikaru must have been wondering how it was possible not to win such a position? I assume this game must have had a very negative impact on both of them.

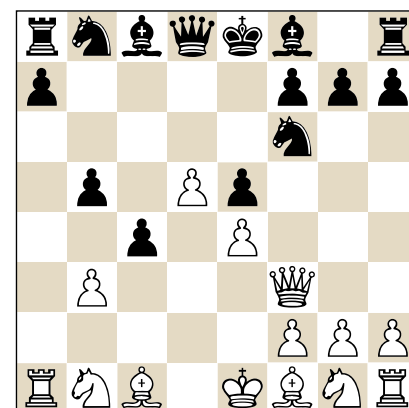
QG 3.2 – D20

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

Hikaru Nakamura

Dubai blitz 2014 (14)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 b5 4.a4 c6 5.axb5 cxb5 6.b3 e5 7.d5 ♖f6 8. ♖f3



8...a5

8...♖c6! 9.dxc6 ♕g4, and who could say that he was winning with Black against a 2750 player after eight moves?

Dubai 2014 Blitz World Championship

1	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2837	17
2	Ian Nepomniachtchi	RUS	2816	16
3	Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2879	16
4	Le Quang Liem	VIE	2817	14
5	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	AZE	2822	13½
6	Levon Aronian	ARM	2863	13½
7	Vishy Anand	IND	2827	13½
8	Rauf Mamedov	AZE	2766	13½
9	Gabriel Sargissian	ARM	2689	13
10	Alexander Morozevich	RUS	2741	13
11	Peter Svidler	RUS	2757	13
12	Sergey Yudin	RUS	2559	12½
13	Aleksey Dreev	RUS	2701	12½
14	Pentala Harikrishna	IND	2669	12½
15	Radoslaw Wojtaszek	POL	2726	12½
16	Anton Korobov	UKR	2758	12½
17	Alexander Grischuk	RUS	2801	12½
18	Eduardo Iturrizaga	VEN	2722	12½
19	Etienne Bacrot	FRA	2744	12½
20	Nikita Vitiugov	RUS	2674	12½
21	Teimour Radjabov	AZE	2706	12½
22	Evgeny Tomashevsky	RUS	2725	12½
23	Vladimir Malakhov	RUS	2700	12½
24	Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son	VIE	2746	12½
25	Pavel Eljanov	UKR	2674	12½
26	Judit Polgar	HUN	2673	12
27	Georg Meier	GER	2663	12
28	Vladimir Fedoseev	RUS	2628	12
29	Zaven Andriasian	ARM	2633	12
30	Maxim Matlakov	RUS	2618	12
31	Ivan Cheparinov	BUL	2636	12
32	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	2835	12
33	Saleh A.R. Salem	UAE	2539	12
34	Daniil Dubov	RUS	2729	12
35	Lu Shanglei	CHN	2668	11½
36	Fabiano Caruana	ITA	2697	11½
37	Eltaj Safarli	AZE	2661	11½
38	Laurent Fressinet	FRA	2705	11½
39	Loek van Wely	NED	2647	11½
40	Alexander Riazantsev	RUS	2703	11½
41	Yu Yangyi	CHN	2771	11½
42	Sergei Zhigalko	BLR	2669	11½
43	Viktor Laznicka	CZE	2650	11
44	Wang Hao	CHN	2668	11
45	David Anton	ESP	2581	11
46	Baadur Jobava	GEO	2628	11
47	Boris Savchenko	RUS	2684	11
48	Al-Modiahki Mohamad	QAT	2559	11
49	Evgeny Najer	RUS	2707	11
50	Arkadij Naiditsch	GER	2643	11
116 players, 21 rounds				

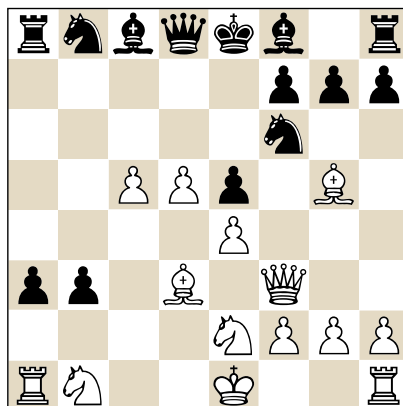
9.bxc4 b4

Now Black just got a (very good) version of the Noteboom Variation.

10. ♖g5 a4 11. ♙d3 b3 12. ♘e2 a3

I once had my rook on b2 after just 12 moves vs. Sutovsky (it went ...0-0-0, ...♖xd2, ...♖xc2 and ...♖xb2), but this isn't bad either!

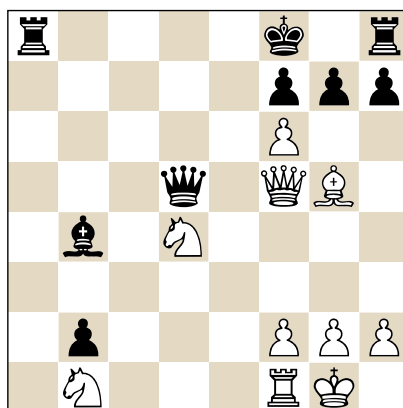
13.c5



13...a2 13...♙xc5 should have clinched the issue: 14. ♙b5+ ♙d7 15. ♙xd7+ ♘bxd7 16. ♖xb3 ♙xf2+, and White can resign.

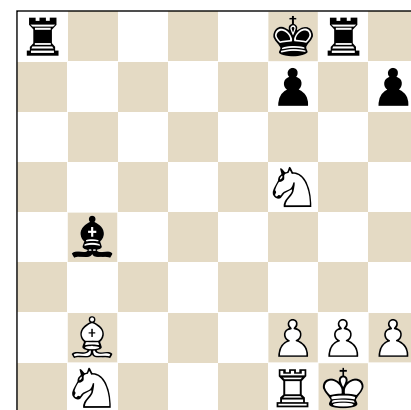
14. ♙b5+ ♘bd7 15.c6 ♙b4+ 16. ♘ec3 b2 17. ♖xa2 ♖xa2 18.0-0 ♖a1 Black would still be better after 18...♙xc3 19. ♘xc3 ♖a1. Now it's going from bad to worse.

19.cxd7+ ♙xd7 20. ♙xd7+ ♖xd7 21. ♖f5+ ♖e8 22. ♖xe5+ ♖f8 23. ♘b5 ♖a5 24. ♘d4 ♖d6 25. ♖f5 ♖a8 26.e5 ♖xd5 27.exf6



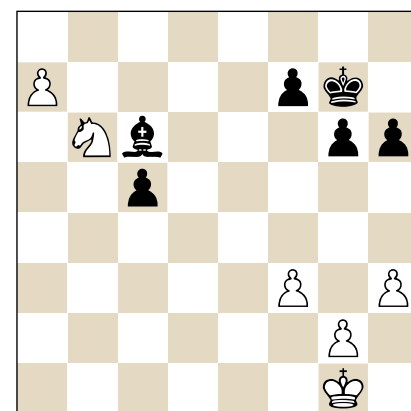
27...♖xf5? This move is hard to explain. Good or bad, 27...♖xd4 had to be played. In fact, it would lead to a perpetual after 28.fxc7+ ♖xc7 29. ♙e3 ♖d6 30. ♙f4 ♖g6 31. ♙e5+ f6 32. ♖d7+ ♖f7 33. ♖g4+.

28. ♘xf5 gxf6 29. ♙xf6 ♖g6 30. ♙xb2



And that Shakhriyar didn't win this endgame is another story.

Levon Aronian finished in sixth place. I had the feeling that he was taking more than he deserved. But that is also a skill. 'Luck' and 'blunders' don't just come like that. However, it wasn't enough for Levon to claim the World Blitz title.



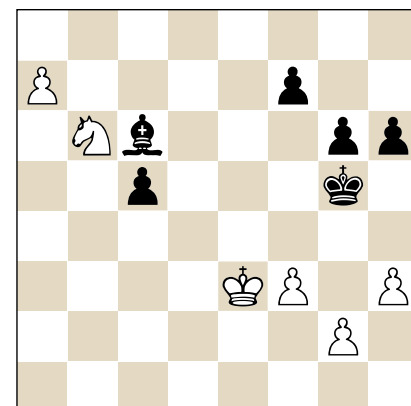
Chanda-Aronian

Dubai blitz 2014 (2)
position after 44...♙c6

45. ♖f2 ♖f6 46. ♖e3

Here I don't see any reason why not to queen: 46.a8 ♖ ♙xa8 47. ♘xa8 c4 48. ♘b6 c3 49. ♘d5+, and wins.

46...♖g5



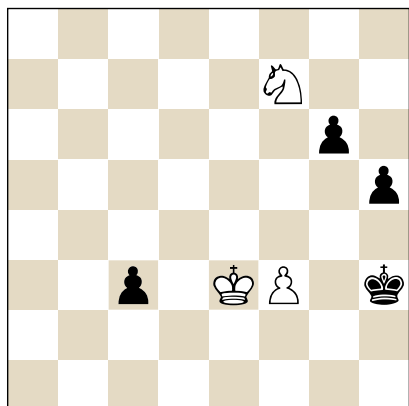
47.a8 ♖??

Here I would have gone for the very safe 47.g3.

47... ♗xa8 48. ♖xa8 ♔h4 49. ♖f2 c4

Bad news; the c-pawn cannot be stopped by the knight!

50. ♖b6 c3 51. ♖e3 ♖g3 52. ♖c4 ♖xg2 53. ♖e5 ♖xh3 54. ♖xf7 h5



55.f4?? 55. ♖e5 still draws easily: 55...g5 56. ♖f7.

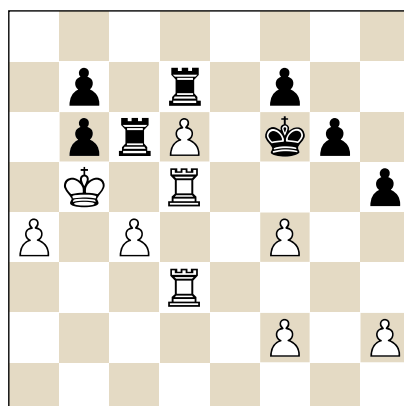
55...h4 56. ♖g5+ ♖g2 57. ♖f3 h3 58. ♖e1+ ♖g3 59. ♖d3 h2 60. ♖f2 c2 61. ♖h1+ ♖g2 62. ♖d4

White resigned.

Vishy Anand finished seventh (or, in points shared, fifth with Mamedyarov, Aronian and Mamedov). Most people may have forgotten how well Vishy can play. The problem is, Vishy may have forgotten as well! Time to turn the clock back, Vishy, and show them how things were in the mid-90s!

Not winning the following position is one thing (although it's pretty trivial, sorry to say so, Vishy), but to lose it?? I can tell from my own experience that such a game leaves you totally

flabbergasted, filled with self-hate, and that it makes it very hard to focus on the next game.



Anand-Nepomniachtchi
Dubai blitz 2014 (15)
position after 31. ♖d5

31... ♖e6

White now played

32.f5+

(nothing wrong with the move in itself) and gradually lost his advantage and, as said, even managed to lose.

Easiest would have been 32.a5 bxa5 33.c5, and now that the d-pawn is defended, it's easier for White to penetrate with his rooks.

Alexander Grischuk is always in time-trouble. It doesn't really matter which time-control he is playing! Sascha loves to think, and he tries to make the best moves, as opposed to many others who just try not to make big mistakes and just play fast. So for me the Blitz World Champion of 2006 and 2012 was a serious contender. But he wasn't the same man after losing to Magnus in the rapid. In the blitz he lost a crazy game against Caruana.

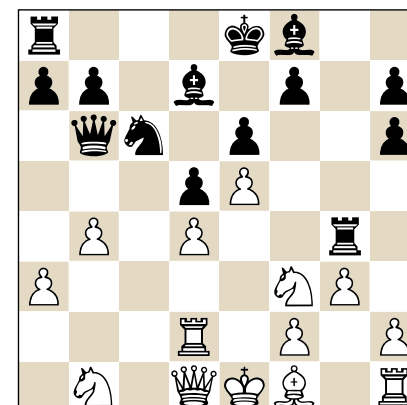
FR 3.6 – C02

Alexander Grischuk

Fabiano Caruana

Dubai blitz 2014 (10)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♖c6 5. ♖f3 ♗b6 6.a3 ♖h6 7.b4 cxd4 8. ♖xh6 gxh6 9.cxd4 ♗d7 10. ♖a2 ♖g8 11.g3 ♖g4 12. ♖d2



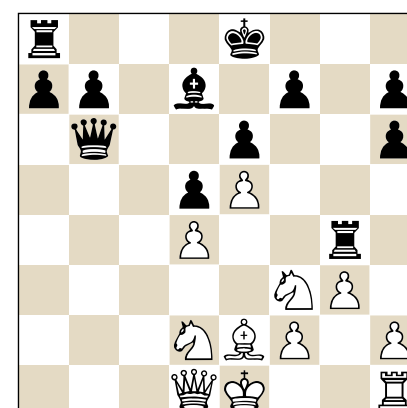
12... ♖xb4

Some bold stuff from Fabiano. More conventional, although that's of course just relatively speaking, would have been 12...a5 13.b5 ♖e4+ 14. ♗e2 ♗xb5 15.0-0 ♗b6.

13.axb4 ♗xb4 14. ♗e2?!

Another move is 14. ♗d3.

14... ♗xd2+ 15. ♖bxd2





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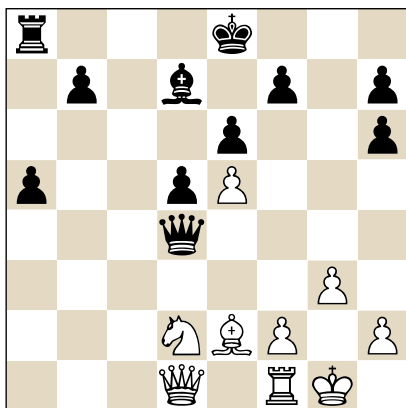
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15...♖xd4

Again our Italian friend continues in style.

15...♖b2 16.0-0 a5 is the continuation for mortals like you and me.

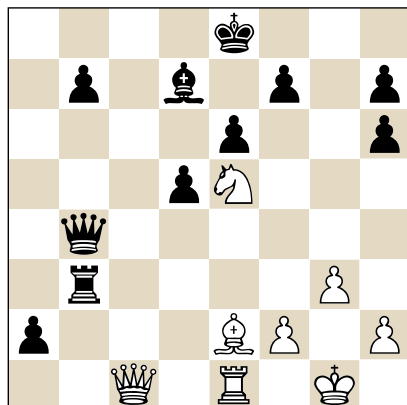
16.♘xd4 ♖xd4 17.0-0 a5**18.♖c2**

Heading into the wrong direction. After 18.♖h5 Black soon has to answer some questions regarding f7.

18...♖c8 19.♖a2 ♖xe5 20.♘f3 ♖e4 21.♖d1 a4 22.♖e1 ♖b4 23.♖e2 ♖c3 24.♖d2 ♖b3

25.♖c1 a3 26.♘e5 a2?

26...♖c3 would have killed all counterplay.

**27.♖g2?**

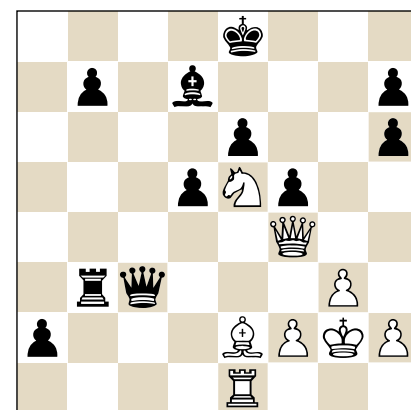
27.♖c7! draws because after 27...♖xe1+ 28.♖g2 ♖c6 29.♖b8+ ♖e7 30.♖c7+ Black has to go 30...♖e8, as 30...♖f6?? runs into a quick mate: 31.♖xf7+ ♖xe5 32.♖f4.

27...♖c3?

27...♖b1! 28.♖c7 ♖e7 wins.

28.♖f4 f5?

Understandable, but losing!

**29.♖h5+?**

29.♖h4!!, and Black can't avoid mate, as ♖h5+ cannot be prevented.

29...♖d8 30.♘f7+ ♖c8 31.♘d6+ ♖b8 32.♘b5+ e5 33.♖xe5?

And 0-1. I guess Sascha had missed 33...♖xb5 34.♖e3+ ♖c7.

After 33.♘xc3 exf4 34.♘xa2 Black would suffer badly in this endgame!

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, aka the Frenchman with two names, I considered to be very dangerous in the blitz.

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He is very fast and very tricky, I know from experience. His problem? Overconfidence, mainly caused by playing too much blitz with a guy also known as 'Too weak, too slow' and giving him insane time odds, and getting away with it as well. I believe that by now he has understood that life is not so simple (yet).

QP 1.13 – A48

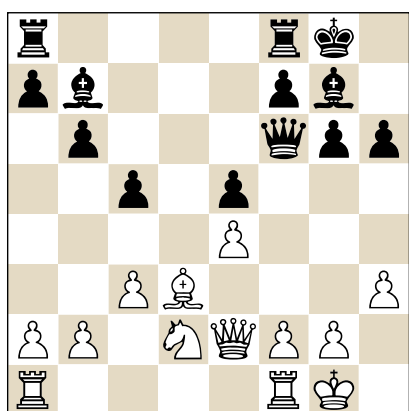
Pentala Harikrishna

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

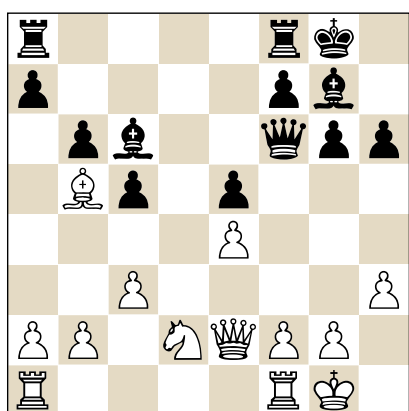
Dubai blitz 2014 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♙g5 ♙g7 4.♘bd2 c5 5.e3 b6 6.c3 ♙b7 7.♙d3 0-0 8.0-0 d6 9.h3 ♘bd7 10.e4 e5 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 dxe5 13.♙e2 h6 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6

First of all, a horrible choice of opening for a blitz game, especially when you are fast and tricky. The position is very static and it's very hard to be tricky, or to do anything at all, for that matter.



15.♙a6 ♙c6 16.♙b5 ♙b7 17.♙a6 ♙c6 18.♙b5



18...♙fd8?

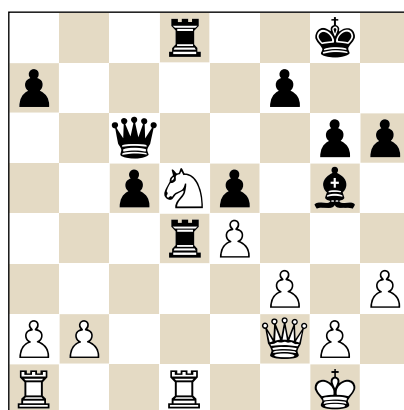
Blind ambition, so losing his sense



'Maxime Vachier-Lagrave is very fast and tricky. His problem? Overconfidence!'

of objectivity. He should have been happy with repeating moves. Personally I would prefer to be White here.

19.♙xc6 ♙xc6 20.♙fd1 b5 21.c4 bxc4 22.♘xc4 ♙d4 23.f3 ♙ad8 24.♘e3 ♙f6 25.♘d5 ♙g5 26.♙f2



26...♙g7!

An exclaim for setting up the trap. I would probably also have fallen for this trick!

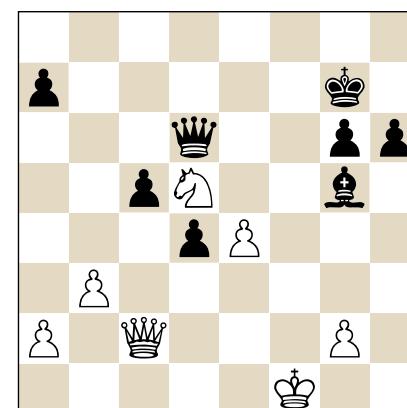
27.h4? ♙xh4! 28.♙c2

28.♙xh4 ♙xd5!.

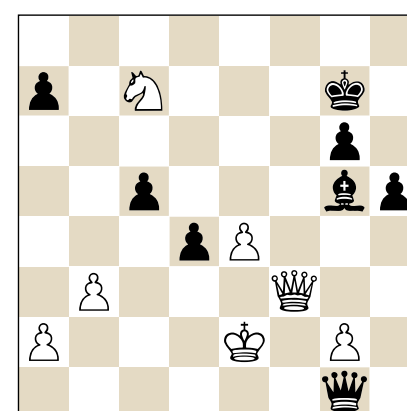
28...♙d6 29.b3 ♙g5 30.♙d3

f5 31.♙e1 fxe4 32.fxe4 ♙f8 33.♙xd4 exd4 34.♙f1 ♙xf1+ 35.♙xf1

Black should be winning here, although in blitz it's never easy when your opponent has a strong knight.

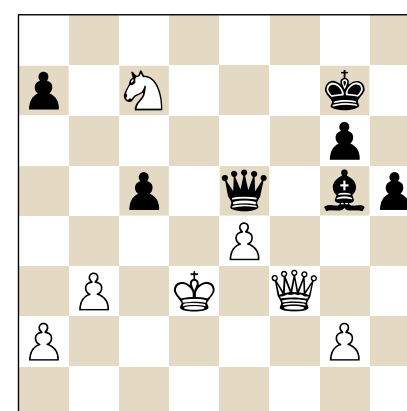


35...h5 36.♙d3 ♙e5 37.♙e2 ♙h2 38.♙f3 ♙g1 39.♘c7



Ouch, now White has some counter-play; always annoying.

39...d3+ 40.♙xd3 ♙d4+ 41.♙e2 ♙b2+ 42.♙d3 ♙e5



43.♘b5?

43.♘d5, and it's anybody's game.

43...a6 44.♘a3 ♙d4+ 45.♙e2 ♙b2+ 46.♙f1 ♙xa3 47.♙c3+

And now for the anticlimax: Black made an illegal move and lost!

Dubai

We will end with a game annotated by the new Blitz World Champion himself. With his win in Dubai, Magnus shot up to first place in the blitz world rankings with a rating of 2948 (talking about superiority) ahead of Nakamura (2906) and Nepomniachtchi (2880).

The game he describes was a crucial victory with which he managed to catch Nepomniachtchi, who in the next round went on to lose to Aronian, while Magnus rolled on with a win over Sergey Yudin, the 28-year-old Russian who surprised by finishing in 12th place.

Did I say, when I described his strengths and weaknesses above, that Magnus is also very tricky?



NOTES BY
Magnus Carlsen

VG 4.8 – C25
Rauf Mamedov
Magnus Carlsen
Dubai blitz 2014 (19)

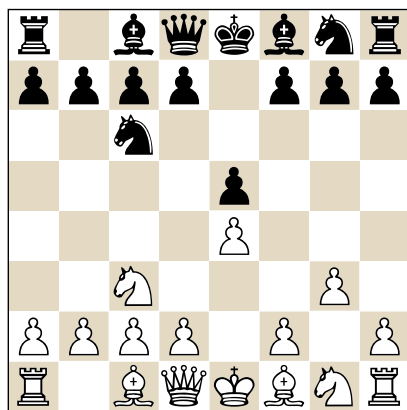
Before this game I was half a point behind some young Russian sporting a Dota 2 t-shirt. It really was the quintessential blitz game: a tough struggle,

‘I knew that ...h5 was a possibility here or on the next move. I decided to save that for my next encounter with Bill Gates.’

gle, then nervousness and mistakes in time-trouble, and a dramatic finish.

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3

After Lu Shanglei played this against me earlier in the tournament, as well as Topalov in the Norway Chess blitz (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.g3), I’ve come to expect some sort of neo-Glek in every black game.

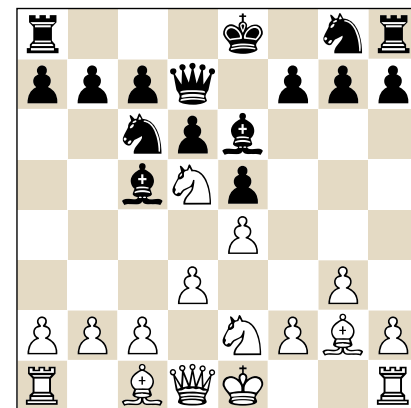


3...♙c5

I knew that ...h5 was a possibility here or on the next move, with the idea to

sac an exchange (♘f3, ...h4, ♘xh4, ...♙xh4). I decided to save that for my next encounter with Bill Gates.

4.♙g2 d6 5.♘ge2 ♙e6 6.d3 ♚d7 7.♘d5! Much better than 7.♘a4, which Lu Shanglei played (a couple of moves earlier), since Black can simply let White take on c5, with an excellent position.

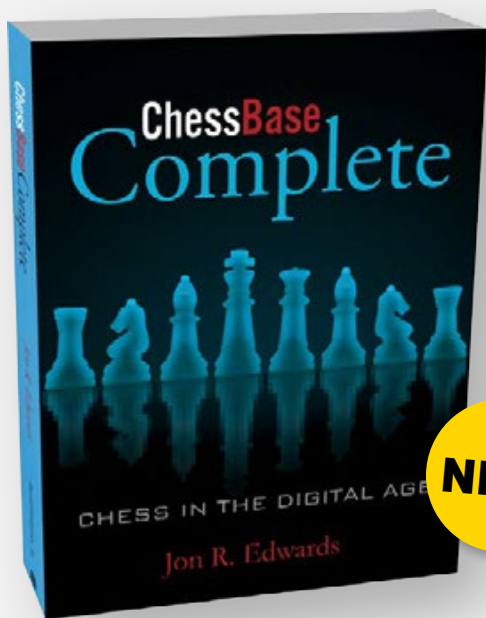


7...♘ge7

7...♘ce7 8.d4 exd4 9.♘xd4 seemed to be slightly better for White: 9...♘xd5 10.exd5 (10.♘xe6 fxe6 11.exd5 e5 is equal) 10...♙h3 11.0-0 (11.♙e2+ is also possible) 11...♙xg2 12.♙xg2 and gives the sort of safe advantage that did not suit me in this particular tournament situation.

8.c3 a6 9.0-0 ♙a7 10.d4 0-0 11.♙e3

With a strong knight on d5, White has some pressure.



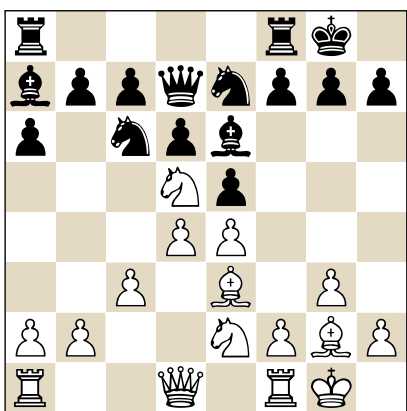
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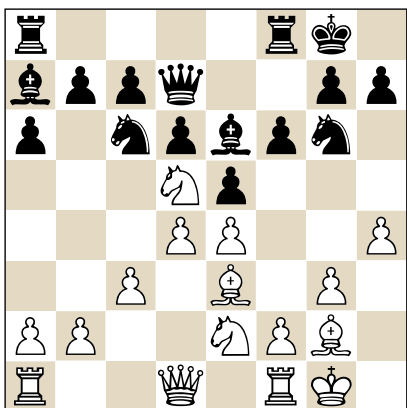


11...g6?!

I had simply missed his next (and extremely natural) move.

11...f6 was much better, with the plan of ...g7 and then ...xd5 to gradually relieve the pressure.

12.h4 f6 I didn't see what else to do, as making a shameful retreat was out of the question.

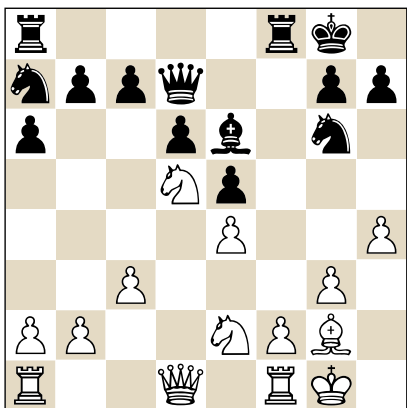


13.dxe5?!

13.h5 was more consistent, of course. I was intending 13...h8 14.h6 g6, with the idea of 15.f4 exd4 16.dxd4 dxd5 17.exd5 dxd4 18.dxd4 dxd4+ 19.cxd4 f7 20.cxf6 dxd6, with a solid position. But on move 15 White definitely has more testing options.

13...fxe5 14.dxa7 dxa7

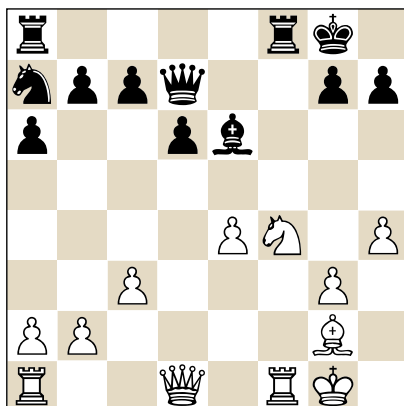
Now I was far more optimistic about my position.



PETER DOGGERS

In a jocular mood Magnus Carlsen indicated that for the moment he will limit himself to three world titles: 'I don't have the patience for correspondence or hands for bullet.'

15.f4 exf4 16.dexf4 dxf4 17.dxf4



17...c6?

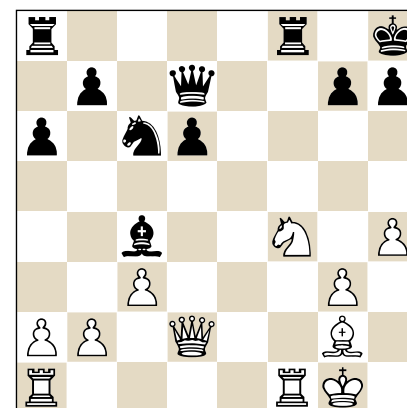
Even in blitz, making such a hasty decision is inexcusable. With a few more seconds' thought I would surely have played 17...c4 18.f2 d6, with a perfectly solid position.

18.e5!

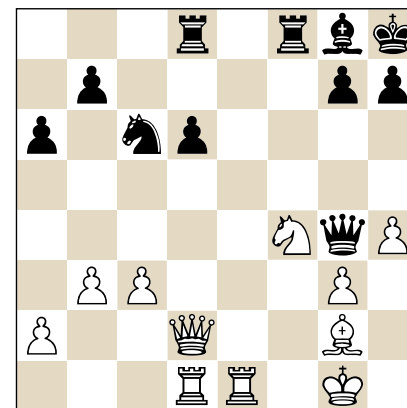
An accomplished tactician like Mamedov was never going to miss this option. His bishop will be activated and I will be saddled with a weakness on d6, without much to show for it.

18...h8 19.exd6 cxd6 20.d2 c4

Pretty pointless. But deciding whether to put the rook on e1 or f2 cost him a few seconds, so the lost tempo was definitely worth it.



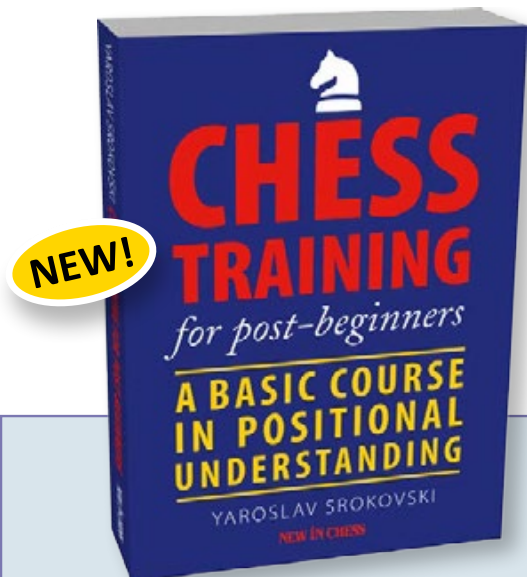
21.f1 e8 22.b3 g8 23.ad1 g4



Completely pointless, of course. But as we were both running out time, I wanted to create some 'threats'.

24.h2 e5

Since h3 was a threat, it was either this or retreating.



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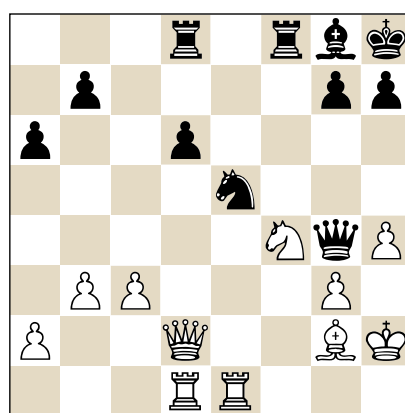
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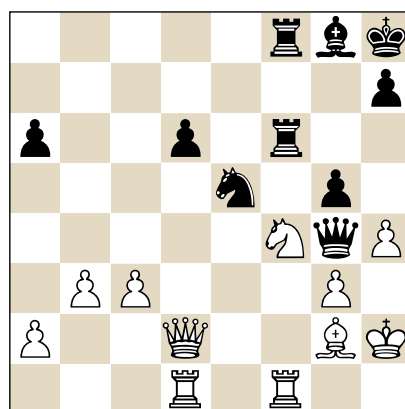
25. Qxb7! Of course. I had not noticed that the pawn was hanging.

25... Rf6 At least I get a couple of tempi for the pawn.

26. Qg2 26. Rxe5 dxe5 27. Qxd8 exf4 or 26. Qe2 Rxf4 27. gxf4 Qxh4+ 28. Kg1 Qxf4 were the sort of thing I was hoping for, in the first case winning, and in the second case with some counterplay.

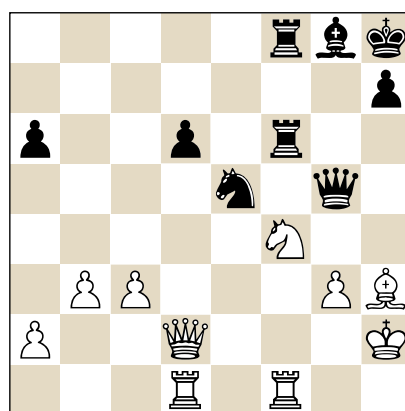
26... Rdf8 27. Tf1 g5

The logical follow-up.



28. hxg5? 28. Qh3! Qf3+ 29. Rxf3 Qxf3 30. hxg5 would have won the game for Mamedov, and the tournament for Ian. But allowing ... Qf3+ is hard to do with just a few seconds left.

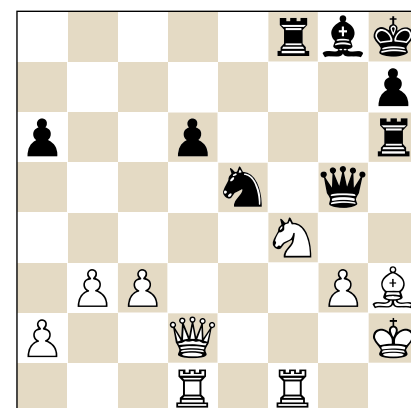
28... Qxg5 29. Qh3



29... Rh6!!

Objectively a pointless move. But I had seen that his next move, which appears to win immediately, has a serious flaw.

29... Qf7, with ideas of ... Rg8 and ... Qh5 or ... Qe8-c6, would have given me excellent compensation.

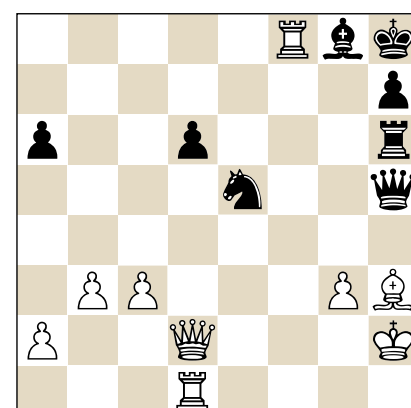


30. Qg6?? I was sure that Mamedov would find this, and hoping that in the few seconds he had available he would not find the refutation.

After 30. Qg2, the rook, which is now doing nothing on h6, would have to return to f6 soon.

30... Qxg6 31. Rxf8 Qh5

Now I was extremely pleased with myself. There is no good way to protect h3, and my own king is surprisingly safe.



32. Qg2

32. Qg1 Qxh3 33. Qg2 would have given him some chances still, but he was understandably flustered.

32... Qxd1 33. Qa8 Qg4+ 34. Qg2 Qe2+ 35. Qg1 Qh2+

Next I will pick up his bishop with check. Then I will either protect my own king with ... Qf6 or ... Rg6, retaining two extra pieces, or mate him. White resigned. ■



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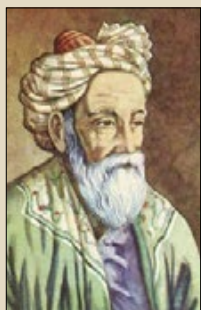
Fair & Square



Adrian Chiles: 'It's like chess now— but chess played in a greenhouse.'
(*The ITV football anchor on the*

intense heat of the Holland v Mexico World Cup match)

John Ratey, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School: 'I call exercise "Miracle-Gro for the brain." Exercise keeps brain cells healthy in a way that playing chess and other highly cognitive activities do not.'



Omar Khayyam: 'We are in truth but pieces on this chess board of life, which in the end we leave, only to drop into the grave of nothingness.'

Garry Kasparov: 'This is a little like winning tennis grand slams on clay, grass and hard court.'
(*On Magnus Carlsen's three world title wins*)

David Bailey: 'The only thing I taught my children was chess because I think if you know chess you can get through life quite easily.'
(*The famous photographer's view on education*)

Alex Yermolinsky: 'Most chess-players I know, myself included, know chess better than they play it.'

Galiya Karjakin: 'I do!'
(*Her immediate reply after her husband said that he didn't know what he was going to do with the €100,000 first prize at the No Logo Norway Chess Tournament*)



Svetozar Gligoric: 'Chess detaches a man from practical reality and introduces him to a new world, a world that guarantees more justice.'

Vladimir Kramnik: 'Every month I look through some 10,000 games, so as not to miss any new ideas and trends.'

Jose Raul Capablanca: 'Excellent! I will still be in time for the ballet.'
(*After defeating Ossip Bernstein in 29 moves in Moscow in 1914, before setting off to the Bolshoi Theatre in a horse-drawn carriage*)

Jeremy Silman: 'The more schizophrenic you are, the more you hold an inner dialogue with yourself, the better at chess you will become.'



Henry Bird: 'Place the contents of the Chess box in a hat, shake them up vigorously, pour them on the board from a height of two feet,

and you get the style of Steinitz.'

Wilhelm Steinitz: 'Fame, I have already. Now I need the money.'
(*When he was ageing*)

Aaron Nimzowitsch: 'The beauty of a move lies not in its appearance, but in the thought behind it.'



Larry Evans: 'In chess what counts is what you know, not whom you know. It's the way life is supposed to be, democratic and just.'

Andre Agassi: 'It's so typical in sports. You hang by a thread above a bottomless pit. You stare death in the face. Then your opponent, or life, spares you, and you feel so blessed that you play with abandon.'
(*In Open, An Autobiography*)

Andy Soltis: 'Pawns are born free, yet are everywhere in chains...'

Bent Larsen: 'I remember a young player who said he had lost three years of his life studying the Najdorf. He realized that he had learned variations, not chess.'

Miguel Najdorf: 'I won't play with you anymore. You have insulted my friend!'
(*When an opponent cursed himself for a blunder*)



Sergey Shipov: 'There are no rules nowadays, only the exceptions!'

William Hartston: 'Always know your own intentions before your opponent forces you to reveal them.'

H.G. Wells: 'Chess is a curse upon a man.'

Mikhail Botvinnik: 'The boy doesn't have a clue about chess, and there's no future at all for him in this profession.'
(*About 12-year-old Anatoly Karpov*)

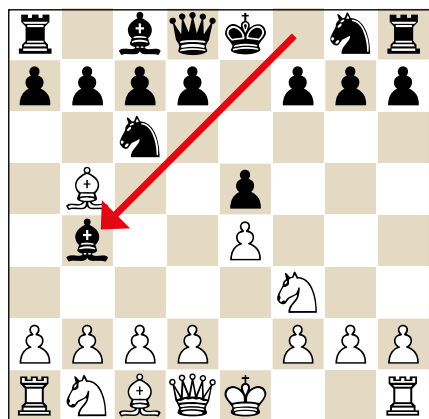
Anatoly Karpov: 'Just imagine: Salvador was accompanied by two of his chic female fans, while I had a KGB officer.'
(*Interviewed at chess24.com, on meeting Salvador Dali for dinner at a New York restaurant.*)



‘What a lousy move. Magnus thinks he can do anything.’



Jeroen Bosch



The Ruy Lopez Alapin

I previously wrote about Magnus Carlsen’s SOS approach to the opening, i.e. ‘his willingness to experiment and to adopt surprising opening variations that are off the beaten track, and sometimes even downright dubious’ (NIC 2013/7). My most extreme example was the game Adams-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010, which went 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.e5 ♘h5 (the North Sea Defence – see NIC 2011/1). Now that is an example that is hard to top, although I experienced a feeling of *déjà vu* while watching the blitz tournament for the No Logo Norway Chess tournament. In Round 7, Carlsen, as Black, essayed the so-called Alapin Variation of the Ruy Lopez. And just as in the above case, I ruefully realized that this line had been in my SOS-file of ideas but that I had never dared to write about it, as I had judged it too dubious for words (or analysis). The present article is my personal *mea culpa*. Semyon Alapin was, after all, a noted theoretician. These days he is best remembered for his 2.c3 versus the Sicilian, but I have written two previous SOS-articles on opening ideas by Alapin: 1.e4 e5 2.♘e2?!, and the interesting 1.d4 f5 2.♚d3.

RL 1.8 – C60

Sergey Karjakin

Magnus Carlsen

Stavanger 2014 (blitz-7)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘b5 ♘b4

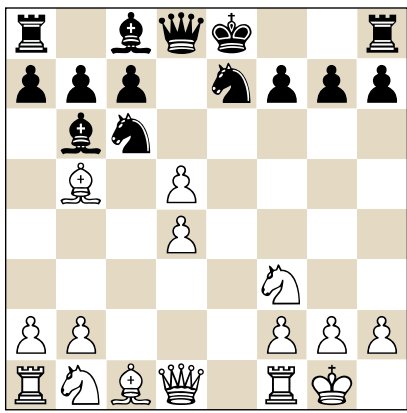
My esteemed fellow-columnist for this magazine, Nigel Short, almost burst out

laughing during the live commentary: ‘Bishop b4. What a lousy move. Magnus thinks he can do anything. That’s a really lousy defence...’

Most theoreticians are of the same opinion, and I suspect most practical players are, too. Having said that, grandmaster Jonny Hector played Alapin’s move quite often in the 1980s and 1990s, and other grandmasters like Kholmov, Velimirovic and Sedlak have also played it more than once. If we discount the games of Alapin himself (who played his line against the top players of his time, among them ex-World Champion Steinitz in 1898), then the highest-level game in which 3...♘b4 was played must be Efim Geller versus Mark Taimanov in the famous Candidates’ Tournament of Zurich 1953. Taimanov reached an absolutely winning position but sadly lost in the end. If we are allowed to count blitz games of four minutes each and two-second increments per move, then the Alapin has now been redeemed by none other than the reigning World Champion!

So what is the point of Alapin’s crazy-looking third move? To understand the method in the madness let’s make a slight detour.

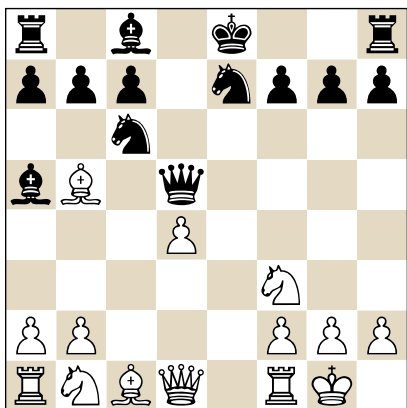
Let’s suppose that Black plays 3...♘c5 and White answers with 4.c3 ♘ge7 5.0-0 ♘b6. Now everything is ready for the central push, and after 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 the positionally desirable move is 7...d5, when 8.exd5



8...♖xd5 9.♔e1+ ♕e6 10.♗g5 (10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.♖g5 was the reason why Alapin didn't like this line) 10...♔d6 11.♖bd2 is I suppose what you could call a fairly respectable theoretical line – it is played by grandmasters – but still one that favours White.

Instead of taking with the knight, it would be so much better if Black could take with the queen, were it not for the awkward 8...♔xd5 9.♖c3. Just suppose that in this position the black bishop was not on b6, but on a5, then you could just chop off the annoying knight now...

My source for this piece of wisdom is an article in Yearbook 19 (1991) by Dutch IM Gerard Welling, who is an ardent admirer of Alapin. The above explanation was given by Alapin in the first issue of *Deutsches Wochensach* in 1898. So now we have our *raison d'être* for 3...♗b4, for after the consistent 4.c3 ♗a5 5.0-0 ♖ge7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 Black has 7...d5! 8.exd5 ♔xd5!.



and now 9.♖c3 ♗xc3! 10.♗xc6+ ♖xc6 11.bxc3 0-0 is absolutely fine for Black.

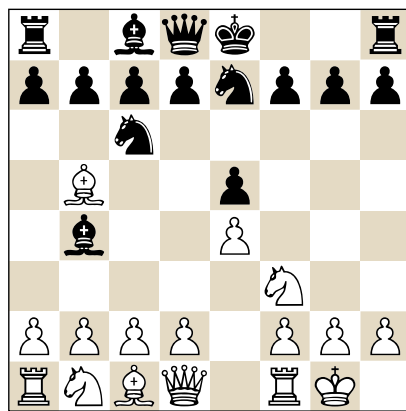
In the sixth round of the actual tournament, the two players met with the same colours. This time Carlsen did not risk 3...♗b4 but went for a Berlin Defence, and after some brief complications the game transposed to a drawish rook ending. After the game Carlsen more or less admitted that nearly the entire game(!) had been part of his pre-World Championship's match preparation. Clearly an argument in favour of 3...♗b4!

So let's return to Carlsen's exciting choice for this blitz game, the lousy 3...♗b4!

4.c3

The most logical move. Or as Bronstein put it in his Zurich 1953 tournament book: 'In the Evans Gambit you give a pawn to lure the bishop to b4 to win time to play c3 and d4, and here the bishop is going to that square voluntarily.'

4.0-0 is a natural move that will often transpose (almost no one can resist the temptation to play c3 with tempo): 4...♖ge7



and now:

– 5.a3 ♗a5 6.b4 ♗b6 7.♗b2 d6! 8.d4 exd4 9.♖xd4 0-0 10.♖xc6 bxc6 11.♗d3 ♖g6, and a draw was agreed in Stevic-Sedlak, Sibenik 2009. Black is perfectly fine.

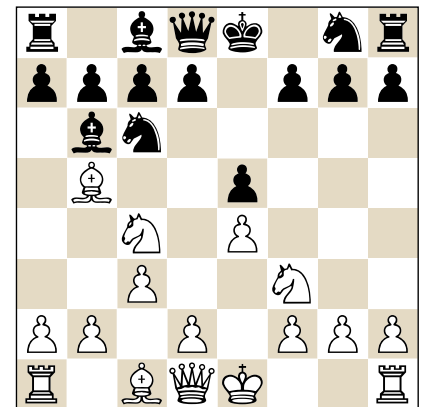
– 5.d4 exd4 6.♖xd4 0-0 7.♗g5!? is an interesting alternative – simply ignoring the bishop on b4.

– While 5.c3 ♗a5 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.exd5 ♔xd5! is Black's main idea again.

4...♗a5 5.0-0

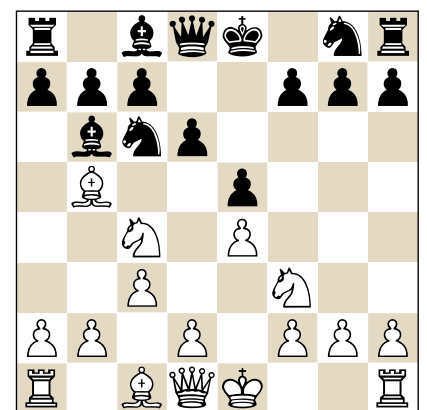
The most popular move. During the live transmission of the game,

I remembered that I had been put out by 5.♖a3!? and that it was this move which had caused me to condemn 3...♗b4 to the file of rejected ideas. The knight is going after Black's proud bishop, and having studied this line once more I can understand my previous concern. Let's have a more detailed look: 5...♗b6 6.♖c4, and now Black has tried several set-ups:



■ 6...f6 has been played by Kholmov, but it looks very outlandish (or Steinitzian) to me: 7.♔a4!, with the positional threat of 8.♖xb6 cxb6, looks quite strong.

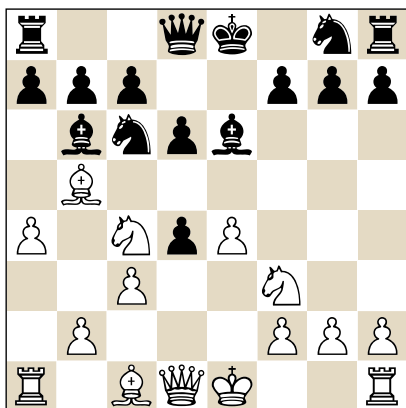
■ No fewer than 10 times did Jonny Hector now play 6...d6, but on the whole he fared quite miserably.



– Enough for a small edge is 7.a4 ♗e6 8.d3 a6 9.♖xb6 cxb6 10.♗c4 d5 11. exd5 ♗xd5 12.♗xd5 ♔xd5 13.♗e3 b5 14.axb5 ♔xb5 15.0-0, Hartung-Nielsen-Hector, Ostend 1990.

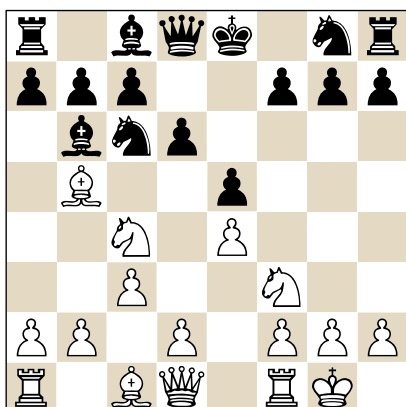
– White can play in the centre with 7.d4, when after 7...exd4 8.cxd4, 8... d5! could be a reason for playing Alapin's line. Black is perhaps still a bit worse, but he is definitely in the game. However, a sharp and dangerous move is 8.a4!? (instead of

recapturing on d4) 8...♙e6 (or 8...d5 9.♘xb6 axb6, Roiz-Hector, Alicante 1989, and now 10.♙xd4 ♘f6 11.exd5 ♙xd5 12.♙xd5 ♘xd5 13.0-0 is an unattractive endgame for Black)



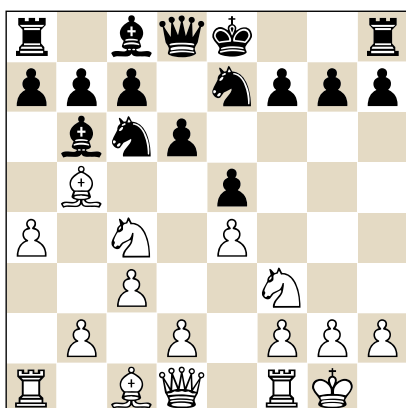
9.cxd4 d5 10.a5! dxe4 11.♘fe5 (11. axb6) 11...♙xc4 12.♘xc4 ♙xd4 13. a6! ♙f6 14.0-0, and White has a huge initiative for two pawns, Hellers-Hector, Malmö 1988.

– The natural 7.0-0 is actually hard to meet as well.



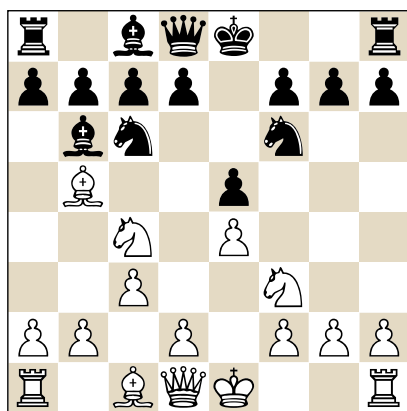
7...♘f6 8.d4 exd4 Schüssler-Lukez, Helsingborg 1990, and now 9.e5! dxe5 10.♘fxe5 0-0 11.♘xb6 axb6 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♙xc6 is strong.

Developing the knight to e7 won't solve Black's problems either: 7...♘e7 8.a4!, and now:



8...0-0 (8...♙e6?!, Smagin-Hector, Geneva 1990, 9.♘g5!) 9.d3! (White protects his knight and now threatens to take on c6 in order to trap the b6-bishop; 9.a5?! ♘xa5! 10.♘xa5 ♙xa5 11.♙xa5 c6; the immediate 9.♙xc6?! ♘xc6 10.a5 allows 10...♙e6!) 9...d5 (9...♙e6, Hellers-Hector, Rilton Cup 1990/91, 10.♘g5!) 10.exd5 ♙xd5 11.♙e1 ♙g4 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 ♙xf3 14.gxf3, and despite the doubled f-pawns Black is in trouble, Hellers-Hector, Haninge 1990.

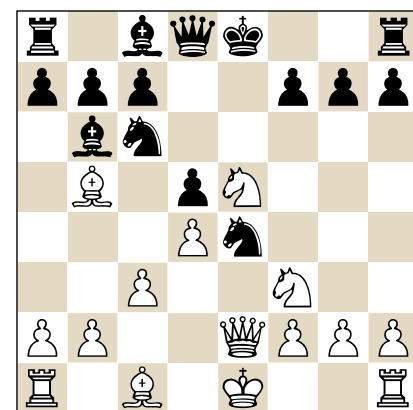
■ Next I thought that Black could perhaps hold his own with 6...♘f6, based on a game by Velimirovic:



– 7.d3 d6 (also good is 7...0-0 8.♙xc6 bxc6 9.♘cxe5 d6 10.♘c4 d5 11.♘xb6 axb6 12.e5 ♘d7 13.0-0 f6 14.e6 ♘c5 15.♘d4 ♘xe6 16.♘xc6 ♙d6 17.♘b4 c5 18.♘c2 d4, and Black had enough for the pawn in Simacek-Sedlak, Plovdiv 2012) 8.a4 a6 9.♘xb6 cxb6 10.♙c4 h6 11.h3 0-0 12.0-0 ♙e8 13.♙e1 ♙e6 and Black was OK in Barlov-Velimirovic, Tivat 1994.

– 7.♙xc6 bxc6! 8.♘fxe5 (8.♘cxe5) 8...0-0 (8...♘xe4 is a suggestion from Velimirovic) 9.d3 d5 10.♘xb6 axb6 11.0-0 dxe4 12.dxe4, Hellsten-Thoeng, Antwerp 1994, and now 12...c5! 13.f3 ♙a6 14.♙xd8 ♙axd8 15.♙e1 ♙fe8 16.♘g4 ♘xg4 17.fxg4 is only a touch better for White.

– However, the main problem is 7.d4! ♘xe4 and now 8.♙e2! (8.♘xb6 axb6 9.dxe5 d5 10.exd6 ♘xd6, Psakhis-Berkovich, Tel Aviv 1992, is less clear) 8...d5 9.♘cxe5. This is Andrew Greet's suggestion, which is awkward to meet. Alapin's bishop is out of play on b6.



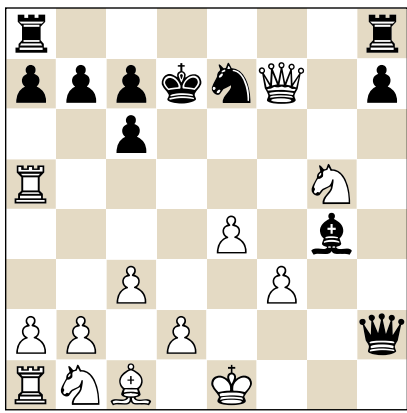
For example, 9...♙d6 10.♘c4 ♙e6 11.♘xb6 axb6 12.0-0 is a position where Black is playing for only two results (a draw or a loss).

I have devoted quite some space to 5.♘a3, mainly because I consider this to be the most critical line. After 5...♙b6 6.♘c4 none of the moves considered – 6...f6?!, 6...d6 or 6...♘f6 – are fully satisfactory. If you want to play 3...♙b4, I suggest that you first come to terms with this line.

Instead of 5.♘a3 and Karjakin's 5.0-0, there are two more moves to consider briefly:

– 5.a4 a6 6.♙c4 (6.♙xc6 bxc6 7.0-0 d6 8.d4 f6 is unclear, according to Velimirovic. I would prefer White, but the position is pretty complex) 6...♘f6 7.b4 ♙b6 8.d3 d6 9.h3 h6 10.♙b3 ♙e7 11.♙a3, Marjanovic-Velimirovic, Titograd 1984, and now 11...♘h5! is strong.

– 5.♙xc6!? dxc6 6.♘xe5 ♙g5 (6...♙e7 7.d4 f6 is safer) 7.♘f3 (7.d4 ♙xg2 8.♙f3 ♙xf3 9.♘xf3 is slightly better for White, according to Keres and Geller, but it doesn't look all that shocking) 7...♙xg2 8.♙g1 ♙h3 9.♙xg7 ♘e7 10.♙g3 ♙h5 11.♙g5 (11.d4 ♙g8 12.♙g5!) 11...♙h3 12.♙xa5 (White can repeat with 12.♙g3, but who could resist taking the bishop along the fifth rank?) 12...♙g4 13.♘g5 ♙h4! 14.♙b3 ♙xh2! 15.♙xf7+?! (Black has a dangerous attack after 15.f3 ♙h1+ 16.♙e2 0-0-0!) 15...♘d7 16.f3? (16.♙c4 ♙hf8 17.♙f1 ♙xf2! 18.♙xf2 ♙h1+ 19.♙f1 ♙h4+ is a perpetual)

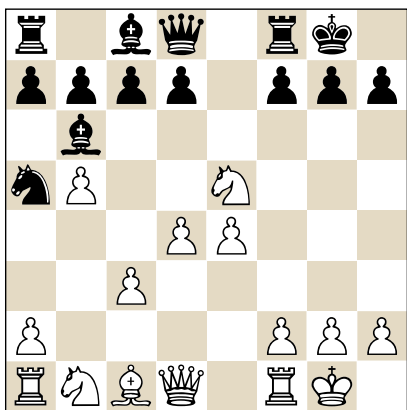


16...f8? (returning the favour; 16...h1+! 17. e2 f8 wins) 17. c4 f3! 18. d4+! e8 19. xf3! (19. xh8+? f8 and mates) 19...xf3 20. f2 h1+, and it all ends in perpetual check, Harmonist-Alapin, Berlin 1898. A fantastic game!

5...ge7 6.d4

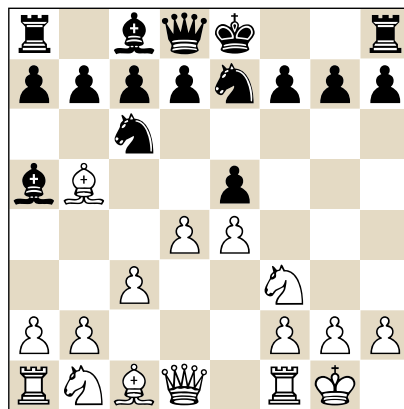
6. a3 is far less dangerous than on the previous move: 6...0-0 7. c4 d5! 8. xa5 xa5 9. xe5 dxe4 10. d4 f6 11. g4, Balogh-Sedlak, Hungary 2011, and now with 11...c5! Black could have taken advantage of the knight's vulnerable position on g4. The game is equal after 12. e3 cxd4 13. cxd4 a6 14. e2 e6.

White can in fact win a pawn by force, and this is exactly what Geller did in his famous game against Taimanov mentioned in the introduction: 6. xc6 xc6 7. b4 b6 8. b5 a5 9. xe5 0-0 10. d4.



Black obtains pretty good compensation for the pawn with 10...e8! (Taimanov played 10...d5?!, and after 11. a3 – Levenfish's suggestion of 11. d2 was strong – 11...e8 12. h5 f6 Geller sacrificed a piece with 13. f4, but after 13...fxe5 14. fxe5 e6

15. d2 dxe4 16. exf5 d6 14. f3. Black was considerably better, although he later tragically lost, Geller-Taimanov, Zurich 1953) 11. d2 (11. d3 f5! 12. g3 h8 13. exf5 d6 14. f3 xb5 15. e3 xf5 was much better for Black in Schlechter-Alapin, Berlin 1897) 11...f5!? 12. dec4 fxe4 13. e3, Anand-Hector, Palma de Mallorca 1989, and now 13...d6 is about equal. After 6.d4 Black is able to implement his main idea.



6...exd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.e5

8. exd5 xd5! is the whole point of Alapin's 3...b4 as explained above. In practice, White has now prepared c3, but he has been unable to prove anything:

– 9. a4 0-0 10. c3 h5 11. g5, Lupu-Hector, Val Maubuee 1990, and now 11...xc3! 12. bxc3 g4 13. xe7 xf3! 14. xc6 xc6 15. d1 d5 leaves Black slightly better.

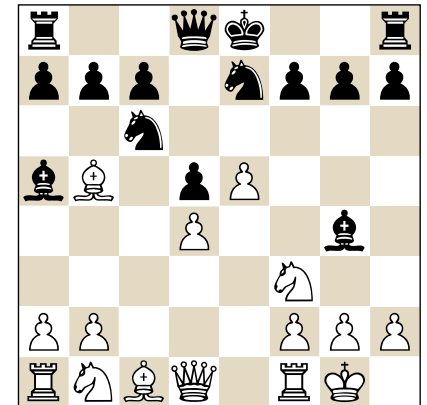
– 9. e2 e6 10. c3 d7 11. e4 b6 12. c5 xc5 13. dxc5 d5 14. f4 0-0-0 15. a4 and after 15...xf3! 16. xf3 d4! 17. xc6 (17. xd4 xd4 18. d1, and the knights are no worse than the two bishops) 17...xc6 18. xd4 xd4 – the endgame favoured Black in Ali Marandi-Sedlak, Plovdiv 2012.

8...g4!?

In the commentary box, Short noted that 'Magnus has a perfectly decent position'. Indeed, we may conclude that the whole set-up with 4.c3 a5 5.0-0 ge7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 d5 is not the critical test of 3... b4.

Equally playable is 8...0-0 9. g5 h6 10. xc6?! (10. xe7 xe7 is

equal) 10...hxg5! 11. a4, Peschardt-Welling, Lyngby 1991, and now 11...g4!, and Black is to be preferred.



9.h3 h5

Objectively stronger is the time-saving 9...xf3 10. xf3 0-0, which equalizes. Pawn d4 is hanging, and Black subsequently plays ...f6.

10. c3

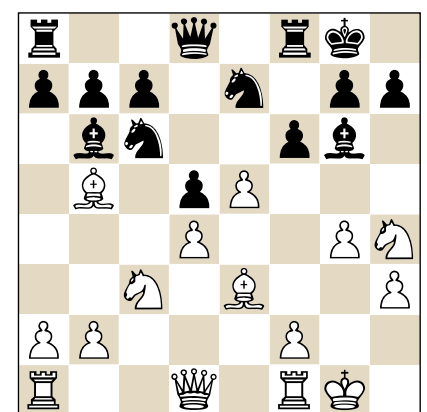
Karjakin could have taken advantage of Black's 9th move with 10. g5 0-0 11. xc6 bxc6 12. a4! (12. bd2 b8 13. b3 b6 14. c1 a5 15. xe7 was agreed drawn in Köller-Maric, Germany 1989. After 15...xe7 16. xc6 a4 17. bd2 b4 Black has sufficient compensation) 12...b6 13. bd2.

10...0-0 11.g4

The pin was annoying. If 11. e3 then 11...f6 or 11...f5.

11...g6 12. h4 b6 13. e3 f6!?

13...xe5 14. dxe5 d4 15. g5 c6 16. xg6 hxg6 17. c4 dxc3 18. bxc3 is certainly easier to play for White.



14.exf6 xf6 15. xg6!?

Karjakin refuses the offer of an exchange:

– 15. ♖g5 ♗xd4! 16. ♖xf6 gxf6, and Black has sufficient compensation – and even more in a blitz game!

– 15. ♖xc6 ♗xc6 16. ♖g5 ♗xd4 17. ♗xg6 hxg6 18. ♖xf6 gxf6 is also decent enough.

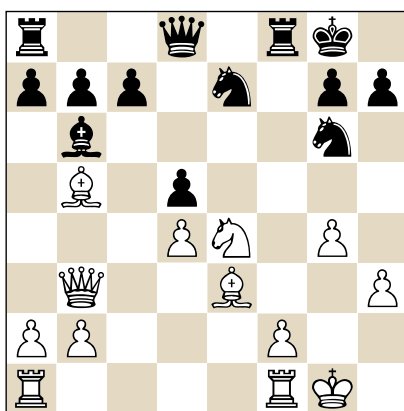
15... ♗xg6 16. ♖b3 ♗ce7?!

The position is highly complex for a blitz game. This is perhaps not the most accurate move, although it works out well in the game. 16... ♖d6 was good, as is 16... ♖h8, in view of 17. ♗xd5?? (17. ♖xd5 ♖d6; 17. ♖ad1 ♗ce7) 17... ♗a5.

17. ♗e4 17.f4 is a touch better for White.

17... ♖f8

17... ♖f3 18. ♗g5 ♖f6 is a decent alternative.



18.f4

Now if 18. ♗g5 then Black has 18... c6! (18... ♖d6 19. ♗e4 ♖d8 repeats; 18... ♖f6 19.f4, and White is slightly better), when 19. ♗e6? (19. ♖d3 ♖d6) fails because of 19... ♖d6 20. ♗xf8 ♖xf8 21. ♖e2 ♖c7, forcing White to play 22.f4 ♗xf4 23. ♖xf4 ♖xf4 24. ♖xf4 ♖xf4, when the attack goes on after 25. ♖d1 ♗g6!.

18... c6 19. ♖d3 ♖h8

So far both players have played very well, but from here on in the lack of time becomes an issue.

20. ♗c5?!

20. ♗g3 ♖d6 21. ♗e2 ♖ae8 is about equal.

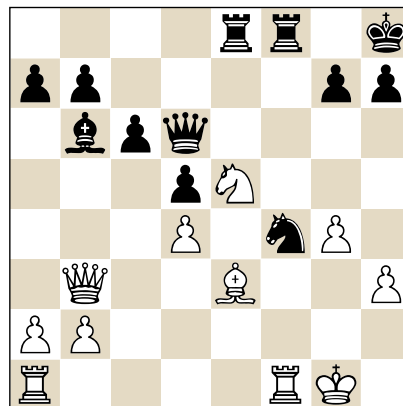
20... ♖d6 Now White is in trouble. The f-pawn is hanging and his king looks a little loose.

21. ♖xg6?!

21. ♗xb7 ♖c7 22. ♖xg6 ♗xg6 23. ♗c5

♖xc5 24.dxc5 ♗xf4, and Black is slightly better.

21... ♗xg6 22. ♗d3 ♖ae8 23. ♗e5 ♗xf4!



Karjakin must have missed that one; now Black has a clear edge.

24. ♖h1?

24. ♖xf4 ♖xf4 25. ♖xf4 ♖xd4+ 26. ♖g2 was a better chance, as 26... ♖f6! is difficult to find in a blitz game (the natural 26... ♖xe5 is met by 27. ♖e1 and because of the pin White is OK).

24... ♗g6!

And now Magnus is winning, but with time running out anything can happen in such a complex position. The clock times were 1.17 versus 35 seconds.

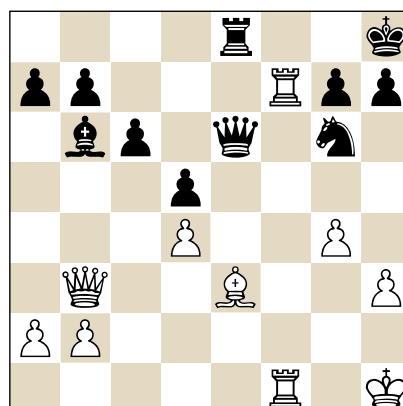
25. ♗f7+

Although this is losing, it is the only decent try. At least White gets an exchange for all his (king) trouble.

25... ♖xf7 26. ♖xf7 ♖e6?

And Karjakin is rewarded. This double attack fails because of Black's weak back rank. Correct was 26... ♖c7!, when the threat of mate forces White to return the exchange, and after 27. ♖xc7 (27. ♖g1 ♖e2 is worse) 27... ♖xc7 Black is easily winning.

27. ♖af1!



27... h5?! Magnus goes all out. 27... ♖e4+ 28. ♖h2 ♖g8 would have kept the balance.

28. ♖g1! hxg4 29. ♖g3 gxh3 30. ♖xb7 ♖g8?! 31. ♖ff7 31. ♖f4!. 31... ♖e4+?!

31... ♖xf7 32. ♖xf7 ♖xf7, and Black should be able to hold. The same goes for 31... ♖xd4 32. ♖xd4 ♖e4+ 33. ♖h2 ♖xd4 34. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 35. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 36. ♖c7+ ♖e7 37. ♖xc6 ♗f4.

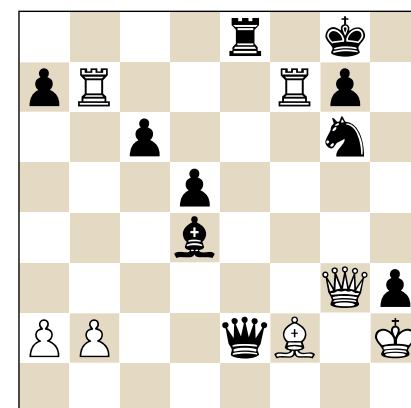
32. ♖h2 White could have gone for a better endgame with 32. ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 33. ♖xf3.

32... ♖e2+?

Objectively Black again had to play for a fortress: 32... ♖xd4! 33. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 34. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 35. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 36. ♖c7+ ♖e7 37. ♖xc6.

33. ♖f2! 33. ♖xh3? ♖h5+ 34. ♖g2 ♗h4+ wins for Black.

33... ♖xd4



Here Magnus's clock showed that he had just three seconds left. Karjakin now had 22 seconds to find the only winning move.

34. ♖xh3

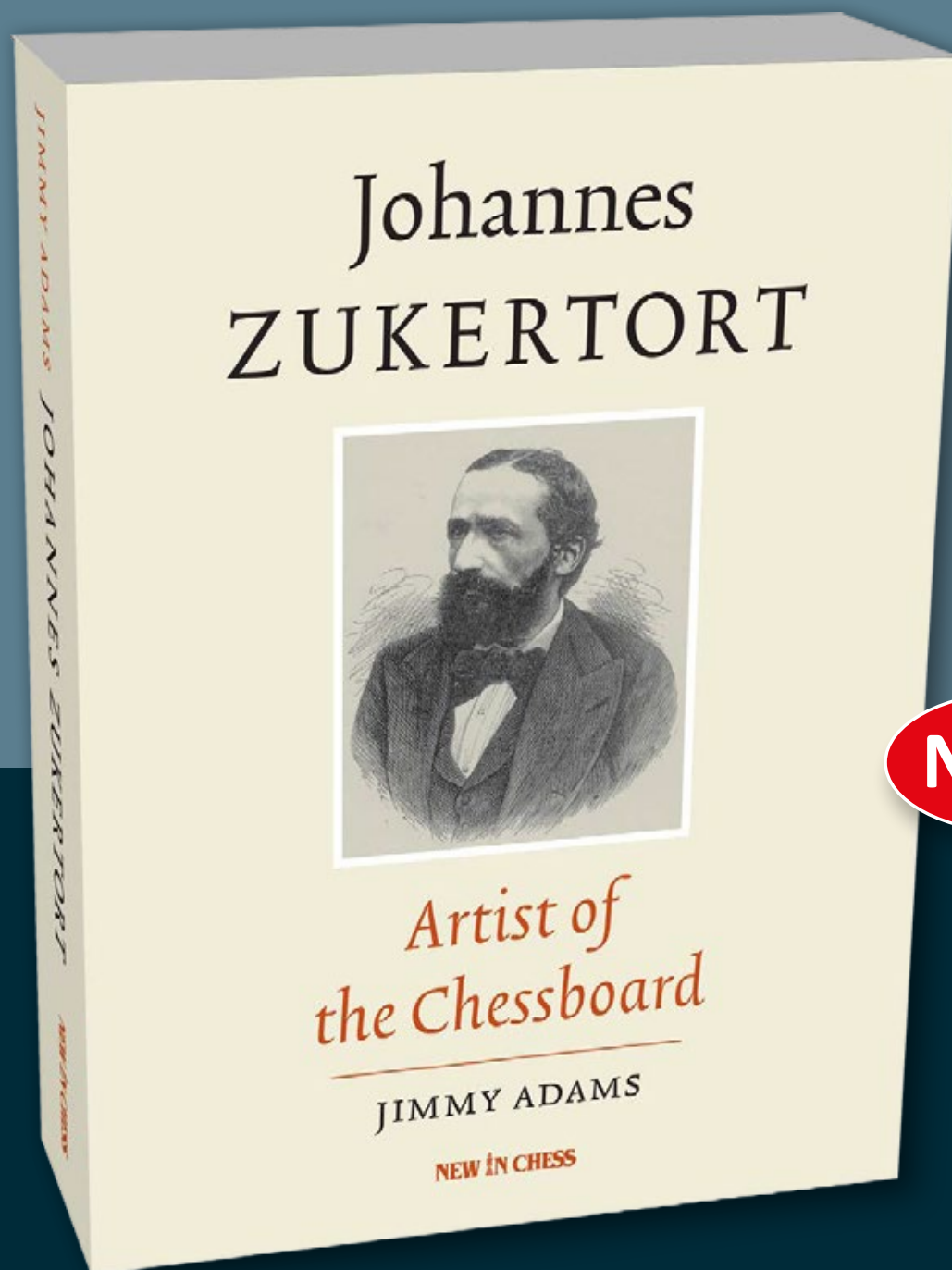
And while executing this losing move, Karjakin lost on time!

Instead of his final move, 34. ♖xg6 was completely winning. After the text the roles have been reversed again: 34. ♖xh3 ♖h5+ 35. ♖g2 ♖e2!, and wins.

A very exciting blitz game and an extraordinary opening variation. We have seen that Black's 3... ♖b4 certainly has its points. Black comfortably equalizes against the set-up chosen by Karjakin. In my opinion, Black's main worry is 5. ♗a3. ■

“Another fine achievement.”

– *Edward Winter, Chess Notes*



Johannes Hermann Zukertort (1842-1888) is undeniably one of the great players of chess history. In this monumental book, originally published in 1989 in a limited edition and highly sought after by chess lovers, Jimmy Adams presents a selection of Zukertort's best games, mainly annotated by Zukertort himself, and a collection of insightful articles on Zukertort from contemporary sources.

A portrait of Hou Yifan, a Chinese chess player, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a black and white checkered dress with a floral pattern. She is resting her chin on her hands and smiling slightly. The background is a blurred green outdoor setting.

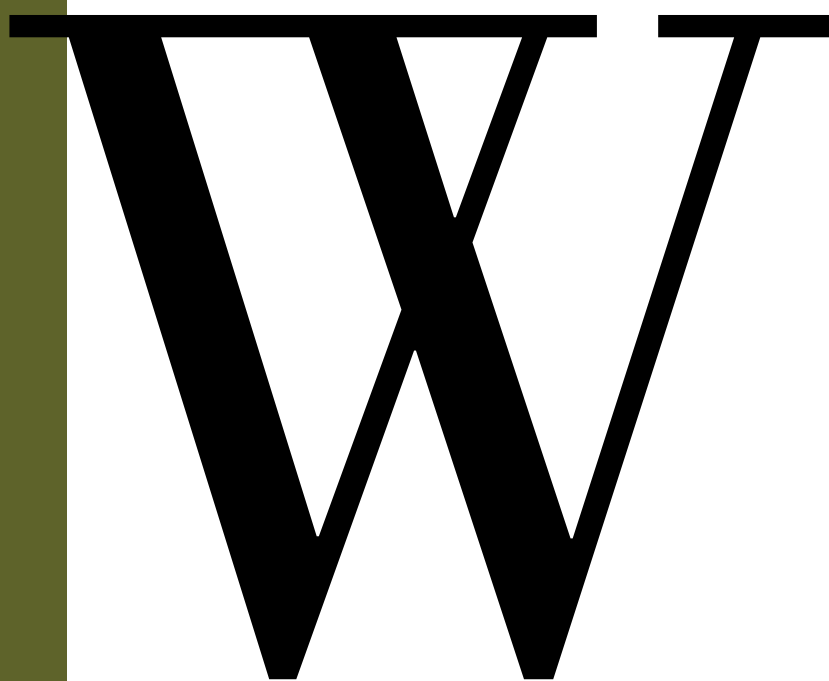
Women's Grand Prix

ALINA L'AMÉ

With her sweeping win in Lopota, Hou Yifan once again confirmed that she has no wish to let her dominance in women's chess be questioned.

The 2013/14 FIDE Women's Grand Prix is being dominated by Humpy Koneru and Hou Yifan. After the Indian had taken a commanding lead in the overall standings with wins in Dilijan and Tashkent, the World Champion retaliated with sweeping victories in Khanty-Mansiysk and, most recently, Lopota. With Koneru still leading by the smallest of margins, everything will be decided in the final leg in Erdenet, Mongolia, this September. But whatever happens, there is little doubt that these two and no one else will play the World Championship match scheduled for October.

Hou Yifan hits back in FIDE GP



While the 'men's' FIDE Grand Prix seems to be temporarily on hold and is only expected to be resumed in the second half of the year, FIDE's Women's Grand Prix is unfolding as planned. Six tournaments spread over 2013 and 2014 will decide who will challenge World Champion Hou Yifan in a match for the highest title this October. If Hou Yifan wins the overall Grand Prix herself the runner-up of the series will be her challenger.

For the 2013/14 GP the four semi-finalists of the 2012 World Champi-

onship were invited, plus the six highest ranked players, on average, on the ratings lists from March 2012 to January 2013 (including Judit Polgar who, as had been expected, declined). Added to that there were six organizer nominees and two FIDE president nominees. In total, so far 19 players have taken part instead of the intended 18, as Guliskhan Nakhbayeva replaced Victoria Cmilyte when the Lithuanian grandmaster had to withdraw from the third leg because of illness.



ALINA L'AM

Humpy Koneru was the convincing winner of the second and third legs of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix in Dilijan and Tashkent.

The first three tournaments in 2013 were held in Geneva (Switzerland), Dilijan (Armenia) and Tashkent (Uzbekistan). This year, the fourth and fifth legs took place in Khanty-Mansiysk (Russia) and Lopota (Georgia). The final tournament will be held in Erdenet (Mongolia).

Each player has to play four tournaments, but only the best three results will count for the final standings. So far, this system has worked very well for the two top favourites, Humpy Koneru and Hou Yifan, who each won two GPs and did poorly in the third one they played.

The 2013/14 cycle started with a sensational win in Geneva by Bela Khotenashvili. The Georgian won 7 games, and with 8 from 11 she finished half a point ahead of Anna Muzychuk (Slovenia) and one and a half points ahead of Tatiana Kosintseva (Russia) and Nana Dzagnidze (Georgia). Just as spectacular as Khotenashvili's win in the first leg was the failure of World Champion Hou Yifan, who lost four games and finished in 8th place.

Khotenashvili proved an unpredictable force. In the GP following her victory, in Dilijan, she finished in bottom place, while in Tashkent she tied for second again. Her final appearance in Lopota was another disap-

pointment. With only one win and eight losses she finished in 11th place.

The second and third legs were convincingly won by Humpy Koneru. Both in Dilijan and Tashkent, the Indian number one scored 8 out of

'It is almost certain that Humpy Koneru will get the chance to challenge Hou Yifan again in the next World Championship match.'

11 and from these 22 games she only lost one (to Bela Khotenashvili!). With these convincing wins Koneru took a firm lead in the overall standings, twice gaining the maximum 160 GP points, and as these were her first two GPs, there was good reason to say that she was leading with a 100 per cent score.

Koneru's sovereign performances put considerable pressure on Hou Yifan, who returned to the series in the fourth leg. In the absence of Koneru, Hou Yifan came up with a firm answer in Khanty-Mansiysk, where she scored 8½ from 11, winning well ahead of two Russian rivals, Olga Girya (7) and Alexandra Kosteniuk (6½).

In the most recent GP in Lopota, Hou Yifan confirmed once again that she has no wish to let her dominance in women's chess be questioned. Only allowing four draws and winning her remaining seven games, she decided the tournament with one round to go and finished two points ahead of runners-up Ju Wenjun (China) and Elina Danielian (Armenia). With her second victory, she also brought back the tension in the overall standings, as Humpy Koneru only added 50 points to her total with a modest 50 per cent score.

The race will be decided in the final GP in Erdenet in early September. Both Humpy Koneru and Hou Yifan will play their fourth GP, and as only their three best results will count for the final standings, the situation is clear for the Chinese World Champion: if she finishes ahead of her Indian rival, she will win the Grand Prix.

Obviously this also goes for Koneru, who is still leading the GP by the smallest of margins. But even if she fails to keep Hou Yifan from winning the Grand Prix, it is almost certain that Koneru Humpy will get the chance to challenge her again for the highest title and have her revenge for the World Championship match that she lost 5½-2½ in Tirana, Albania, in 2011.

Following her sweeping wins in Khanty-Mansiysk and Lopota, we asked Hou Yifan to annotate her favourite games from these two tournaments. We are delighted that despite her studies at Beijing University and incessant chess commitments she kindly obliged.

NOTES BY
Hou Yifan

SI 24.1 – B85

Hou Yifan

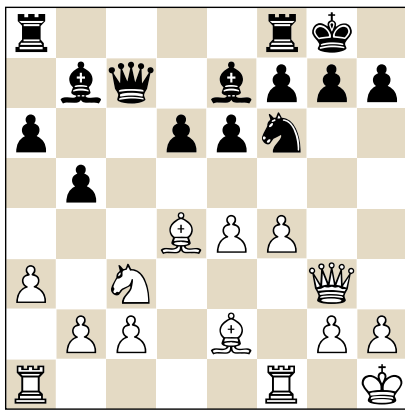
Olga Giry

Khanty-Mansiysk 2014 (9)

The Khanty-Mansiysk Women's Grand Prix was the first stage of the year 2014 and the fourth stage of the overall 2013/2014 cycle of the WGP. The tournament took place at the Ugra Chess Academy, the usual venue there. This game was played in Round 9, and as the difference between us was one point, this was a key game. (Hou Yifan was leading comfortably with 6½ out of 8, while 22-year-old Olga Girya from Russia, who had just won three games in a row, was in sole second place with 5½ points out of 8 games – ed.) Let's see what happened.

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.♘c3 ♘c6
4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♔c7 6.♙e3
a6 7.♙e2 ♘f6 8.0-0 ♙e7 9.f4
d6 10.♙h1 0-0 11.♚e1 ♘xd4
12.♙xd4 b5 13.♚g3 ♙b7 14.a3**

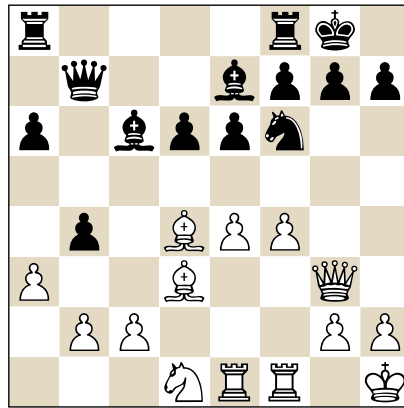
All these moves have been played many times before.



14...♙c6

Another main option here is 14...♖ad8, which is favoured more by top players nowadays: 15.♖ae1 ♗d7 16.♙d3 ♖e8, and here White has many possibilities to maintain the pressure on the kingside. But it's mainly a complicated position and playable for both sides.

15. ♖ae1 ♔b7 16. ♙d3 b4 17. ♘d1

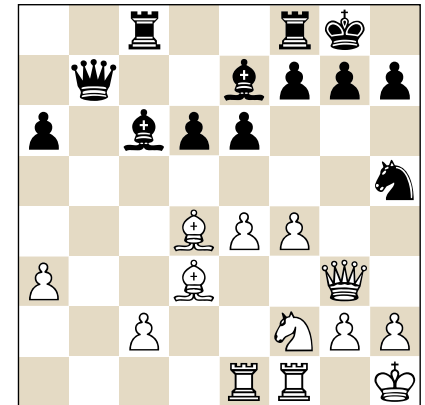


17...bxa3

My game against Navara in 2009 continued 17...♘b5 18.axb4 ♘xd3 19.cxd3 ♔xb4, and a dozen moves later it ended in perpetual check.

18.bxa3 ♖ac8

Even here everything is still quite well-known. The position is unbalanced. While White has some attacking opportunities on the kingside, the isolated pawns on the queenside are going to favour Black if we reach an endgame. With the text-move Black prepares ...♖b5 in order to exchange the light-squared bishops. The more pieces she can exchange, the more she will be able to mitigate the pressure.



There were also some games with 18... g6, intending to activate the knight.

19. f2 h5

20. ♔g4

A new move. In some games 20. ♔f3 was tried, which I also considered for a while, but then I realized that after 20... ♖xf4! (20... g6 21. ♗g4 gives White attacking chances) 21. ♙xg7? (after 21. ♔xf4 e5 22. ♙xe5 dxe5 23. ♔xe5 ♙xa3, with the bishop pair and a passed pawn on the a-file, Black will certainly not be worse) 21... ♖xd3 22. ♔g3 ♖xf2+ 23. ♙xf2 ♙xe4! the white attack peters out and Black's

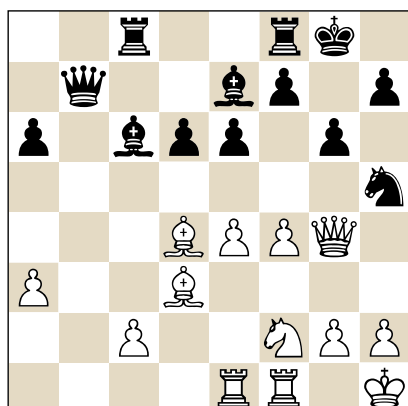
Grand Prix standings

				Geneva	Diliġan	Tashkent	Khamty- Mansiysk	Lopota	Erdenet	Played	Best 3
1	Humpy Koneru	IND	2613	160	160		50	x	3	370	
2	Hou Yifan	CHN	2629	45		160	160	x	3	365	
3	Anna Muzychuk	SVN	2561	130	120	85	50		4	335	
4	Nana Dzagnidze	GEO	2541	100	120	65	90		4	310	
5	Bela Khotenashvili	GEO	2518	160	10	120	20		4	300	
6	Kateryna Lahno	UKR	2540	60		120	85	x	3	265	
	Ju Wenjun	CHN	2538	75		70	120	x	3	265	
8	Dronavalli Harika	IND	2513		60	85	75	x	3	220	
9	Olga Girya	RUS	2493	10	30	55	130		4	215	
	Alexandra Kosteniuk	RUS	2533	45		55	110	50	4	215	
11	Tatiana Kosintseva	RUS	2476	100	90		15	x	3	205	
12	Antoaneta Stefanova	BUL	2488		60	30	65	75	4	200	
13	Anna Ushenina	UKR	2488	75	80		45	x	3	200	
14	Elina Danielian	ARM	2458		30	40	120	?	3	190	
15	Zhao Xue	CHN	2542			85	45	30	x	3	160
16	Batchimeg Tuvshintugs	MNG	2346	20	60		15	x	3	95	
17	Victoria Cmilyte	LTU	2525	30	30			x	2	60	
	Nafisa Muminova	UZB	2332			20	30	10	x	3	60
19	Guliskhan Nakhbaveva	KAZ	2300			10			1	10	

First place: 160 GP points, second 130, third 110, fourth 90 and then 80, 70, 60 etc. down to 10 points for last place. In case of a tie the points are split evenly.

material advantage will give her a winning position.

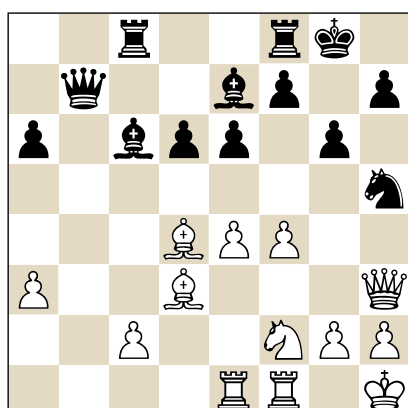
20...g6



21. ♖h3

The first intuition after 20...g6 is to use the weakened dark squares and the most direct way is to move the knight to g4. So the idea of a queen move is quite natural. But where to go?

There was another option: 21. ♕f3 f5! (preventing ♗g4. The main point of losing a tempo here was that 21... ♗xf4 22. ♕xf4 e5 23. ♗g4! exd4 24. ♗h6+ ♕g7 25. ♗xf7 gives White attacking chances) 22. ♖b1 ♕a8 23. ♕c4 ♕d7 24. ♕d3 ♕c6, and chances should be equal.



21... ♕d7?!

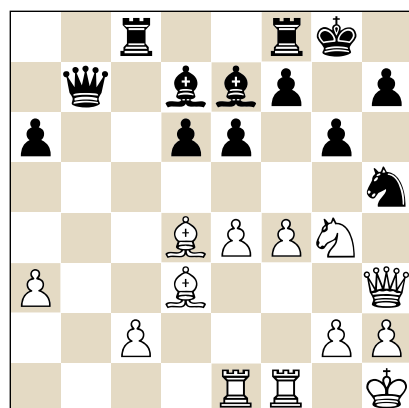
A critical moment.

The main alternative was 21... ♗xf4 22. ♗g4, threatening mate in one, so the white queen can obviously not be taken: 22...e5 23. ♖xf4 exd4 24. ♗h6+ (and not 24. ♖f1 ♕g5 25. ♗h6+ ♕xh6 26. ♕xh6 ♕b5, and Black is in clover) 24... ♕g7 25. ♖f1 f5!? 26. exf5 ♕g5, with a messy position that the computer assesses as equal, but when humans are playing, we can only

judge it as 'a complicated position with chances for both sides'.

Another move was 21...f5!?, with the same idea of preventing ♗g4: 22. ♕c4 d5 23. ♕b3 ♕f6!, 'with a complicated position with chances for both sides'.

22. ♗g4



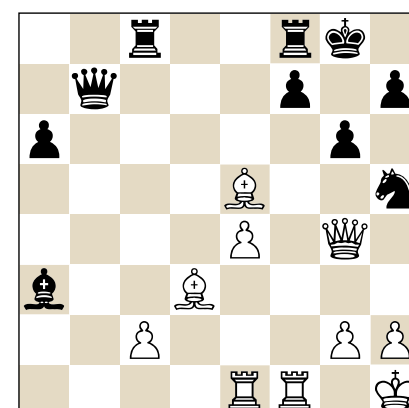
22...e5

This push upsets the balance. After only a few moves the position will be in White's favour. But I didn't see any better suggestions for Black. If 22...f6 23. f5 e5 24. ♕e3 the only defender here is the knight on h5, but

all White's pieces are waiting to join the battle. Objectively, it is difficult for Black to hold the position.

23. fxe5 ♗xg4 24. ♕xg4 dxe5 25. ♕xe5 ♕xa3

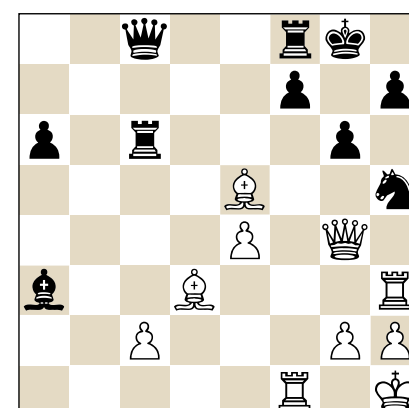
This is obviously a very comfortable position to play as White. You only have to avoid the exchange of the dark-squared bishops and keep the queens on.



26. ♖e3

At first I was attracted to the forced line 26. ♖a1 ♕e7 27. ♖f5 f6 (27... ♗g7 28. ♕f6 ♕b4 29. ♖f3, and White has achieved something) 28. ♕d4, which is still better but the white position has not really improved, so I decided to try the move in the game.

26... ♖c6 27. ♖h3 ♕c8



28. ♕f3!

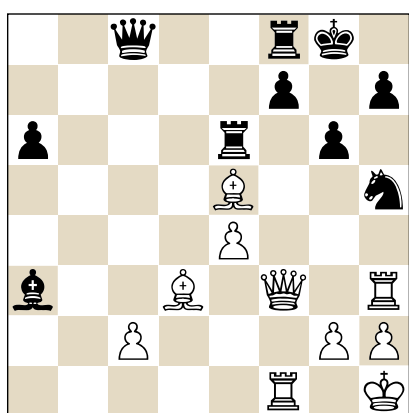
Attacking is far more important here than material gain.

After 28. ♕xc8 ♖xc8 29. g4 ♗g7 30. ♖hf3 ♖f8 31. ♖a1 ♕d6 32. ♕xd6 ♖xd6 33. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 34. ♕xa6 the extra pawn will not yield White clear winning chances, since Black can easily defend against the passed c-pawn in the knight vs. bishop ending.

28... ♖e6

Prize money and Grand Prix points

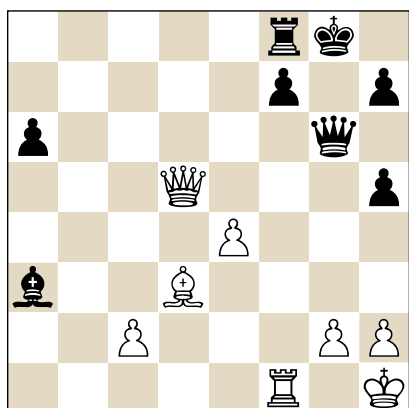
Place	Single GP event	Overall standings	GP points
1	€10,000	€25,000	160
2	€8,250	€20,000	130
3	€6,750	€15,000	110
4	€5,750	€10,000	90
5	€5,000	€7,500	80
6	€4,500	€5,500	70
7	€4,250	€4,000	60
8	€4,000	€3,000	50
9	€3,250	-	40
10	€3,000	-	30
11	€2,750	-	20
12	€2,500	-	10



29. ♖xh5! gxh5

After 29...f6 30. ♕d4 gxh5 31. ♖xh5 the power of the bishop pair is quite apparent.

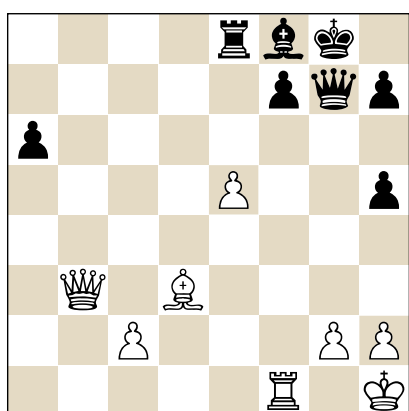
30. ♕f6 ♖xf6 31. ♖xf6 ♔e6
32. ♖g5+ ♔g6 33. ♖d5



33...♖e8?!

This last mistake immediately loses. But, to be honest, it's a hopeless position anyway.

34. e5 ♖g7 35. ♖b3 ♕f8



36. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 37. ♕c4 ♖xc4
38. ♖xc4+ ♔g7 39. ♖d5 ♕e7
40. ♖d7 ♕f8 41. ♖f5+ ♔g7
42. ♖xh5 ♖b8 43. g3 ♖b5
44. ♖g4+ ♕f8 45. ♖f4+ ♔g7
46. e6 Black resigned.



NOTES BY
Hou Yifan

EO 65.7 – A35

Hou Yifan

Antoaneta Stefanova

Lopota 2014 (5)

This game was played in Round 5 in Lopota. I was leading with 3½ out of 4, half a point ahead of a group of three followers, Ju Wenjun, Harika Dronavalli and Nana Dzagnidze.

1. c4 g6!?

This surprised me a little bit, since it's the second time she played this move order. The first time was in May.

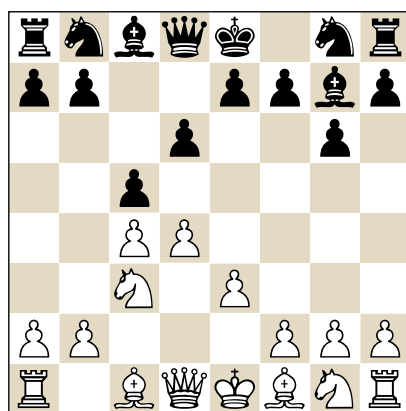
2. ♖c3 c5 3. e3!?

Avoiding the main line. This option was recently tried by Grischuk in his game against Giri at Norway Chess 2014.

3... ♕g7 4. d4 d6

It seems that after this move the structure is mostly fixed. With ...d6 normally Black gives up the possibility of playing ...d5 after exchanging the d4-pawn.

Other possibilities, which look more common to me, are: 4...cxd4 5.exd4 ♖f6 6.d5!?, which leads to a 'counterplay' position, and 4...♖f6 5.d5 d6, when later on Black can steer for a Benoni with ...e6, when e3 looks a bit awkward for White.



5. h3

An interesting idea with the obvious intention to restrict Black's light-squared bishop. But later on in the game I began to have my doubts about this move, as at some point it

looked unnecessary and kind of a waste of time.

5. ♖f3 makes more sense here, when after 5... ♕g4 6. ♕e2 it's too early for Black to give up the bishop.

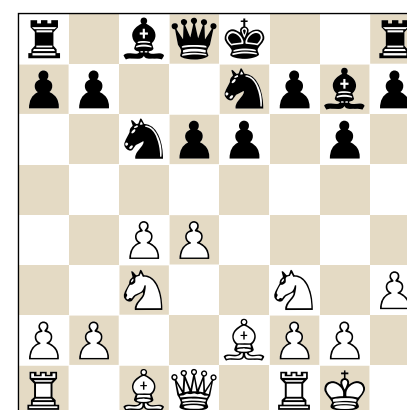
5... ♖c6 6. ♖f3 e6

This is a very active idea to keep the knight on c6, because after 6... ♖f6 7.d5 there's no good place for the knight and in any case White will gain a few tempi with this advance.

7. ♕e2 ♖ge7 8. 0-0 cxd4

This kind of structure always offers many different possibilities for both sides and each of them looks quite attractive. Of course Black could try 8...0-0 here, when I didn't see anything better than pushing my pawn, since there are no waiting moves for White: 9.d5 exd5 10.cxd5 ♖e5 11. ♖d2 ♖f5! (it's important to activate the knight before it is restricted by e4).

9. exd4



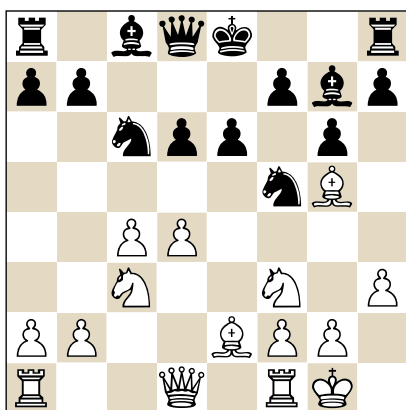
9... ♖f5

Antoaneta continues with the idea she had when she decided to exchange in the centre. The key point of her moves is the attempt to try and occupy the d4-square.

9...d5 is a simpler choice, when after 10.cxd5 exd5 11. ♕g5 0-0 White has a slight advantage, but basically the position is just equal.

10. ♕g5

Here I thought for a long time, trying to choose between the text-move and 10.d5 ♖cd4 11. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 12. ♕e3 ♖f5! (this move I only found later. At first I looked at 12... ♖xe2+ 13. ♖xe2 0-0 14. ♖ac1, with easy play for White: just develop on the queenside).



10...♔b6

A direct and human move! And actually it's also the best, according to the engines!

But here I would like to mention another very interesting variation: 10...f6!? 11.♕c1 (there's no better place for the bishop!) 11...e5 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♔xd8+ ♖xd8 14.g4 ♗e7, and this endgame favours White, but there is still a lot of counterplay for Black.

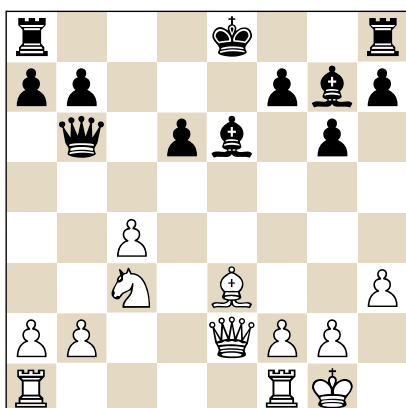
11.d5 ♗cd4

Taking on b2 is too dangerous, since the black queen will be trapped! Try to think here for a while to test yourself. The answer is: 11...♔xb2 12.dxc6 ♔xc3 13.cxb7 ♕xb7 14.♔a4+ ♖f8 15.♖ab1, and Black loses material.

12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 13.dxe6

Here 13.♕e3 is another try, since the knight is tied up now, but after 13...e5 14.♗b5 0-0 it seems as if the d4-square is in Black's control.

13...♕xe6 14.♕e3 ♗xe2+ 15.♔xe2

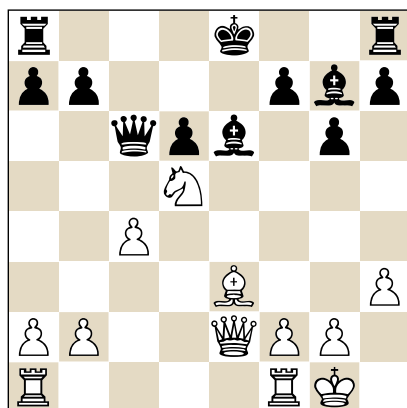


15...♔c6

The most natural reaction, but maybe not the best one, since after White's next move Black's king will be trapped in the centre.

More accurate was 15...♔a6!?, to get the queen to a safer square with gain of tempo: 16.♗b5 0-0 17.b3!. But with this brilliant idea White can keep some advantage in an unbalanced position. Without this sacrifice, White's pieces cannot be made to coordinate well and the c4- and a2-pawns will be difficult to defend.

16.♗d5

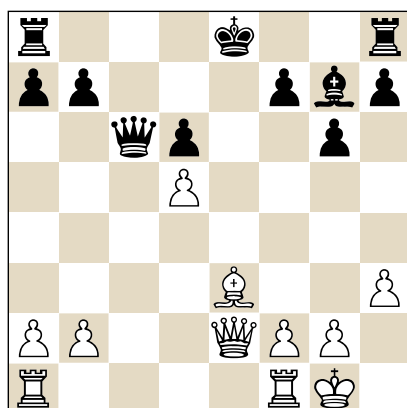


16...♕xd5?

The beginning of some miscalculations, but frankly speaking the position is already hard to control.

The only chance to somewhat muddy the waters at this point was 16...b5! 17.♖fd1! bxc4 (17...♔xc4 18.♗f6+!!, and now we understand why the rook was better kept on a1 before: 18...♕xf6 19.♔f3 ♗e7 20.♖ac1, winning) 18.♕f4, and Black's king in the centre will give White enough compensation and the c4-pawn will be recaptured quite soon.

17.cxd5



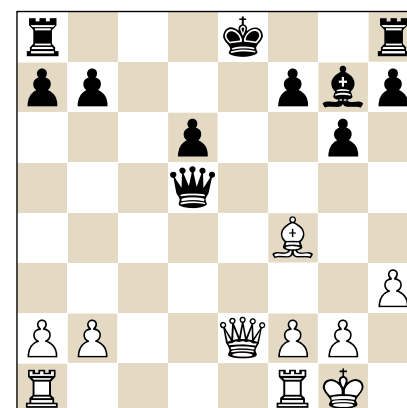
17...♔xd5?!

This last mistake of the game leaves Black with a hopeless position. The only move was 17...♔a6, when after 18.♔xa6 bxa6 19.♖ac1 ♗d7

20.♖c6 Black, with her weak and isolated pawns, will have a very difficult position, since the open c-file is also in White's control. But at least there is still equal material and this endgame cannot be judged as hopeless for Black.

18.♕f4+!

Now the black king is in danger and the two rooks will no longer be connected. The main problems of such open positions have already been indicated above, so the rest of the moves constitutes just a cumbersome defence.



18...♔f8

After the game Antoaneta confessed that she had missed 18...♕e5 19.♖fd1 ♔e6 20.♔b5+ in her calculations before she took on d5.

Similar to this line and equally winning is 18...♔e6 19.♔b5+ ♖f8 20.♖fe1.

19.♖fd1 ♔f5 20.♕xd6+ ♖g8 21.♖ac1 h5 22.♖c7 b5

In serious time-trouble it's quite normal for players to make bad moves in such difficult positions.

The most natural reply was 22...♔h7, since all through the game Black's idea had been to put the king in a safe situation, and here this good chance shouldn't have been missed, even if it wasn't enough: 23.♔c4 ♖hc8!. Looking for some drawing possibilities in the endgame, but after 24.♔xf7 ♖xc7 25.♔xc7 ♖c8 26.♔xb7 ♖d8 27.♔e7 White is winning anyway.

23.♖d3 ♖c8

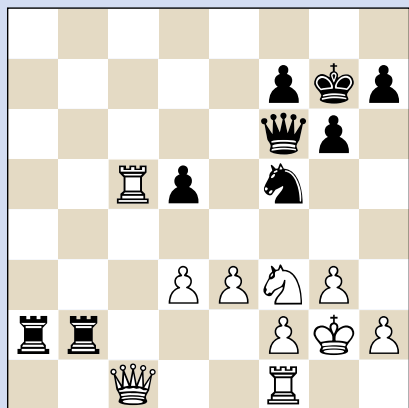
If 23...♖d8 24.♖f3! ♔b1+ 25.♔h2 ♖xd6 26.♖fxf7, and Black will be mated in a few moves.

24.g4 hxg4 25.hxg4

Black resigned. ■

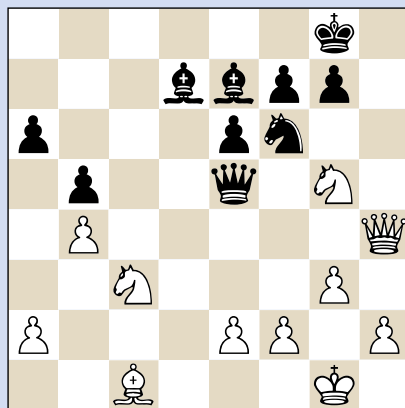
Beware: Brilliancy! Solutions of page 43

Yochanan Afek



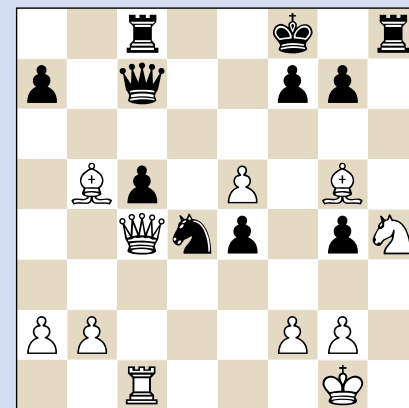
Bouwmeester-Botvinnik
Wageningen 1958

Perhaps the 'Patriarch' was focussing too much on his doubled rooks on the second rank. Otherwise, how could he overlook the straightforward **27...♖b1!** **28.♙xb1 ♜xe3+** **29.♔g1 ♜xf3**



Alekhine-Euwe
Netherlands 1937

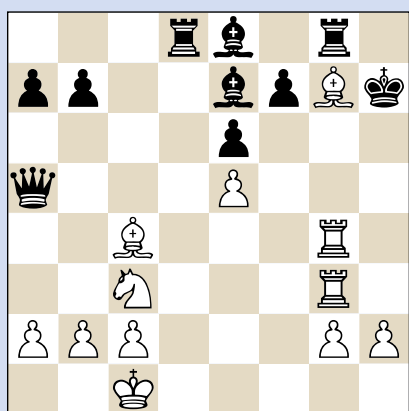
The all-time king of queen sacrifices failed to notice a rather 'standard' one: **26.♙h8+! ♜xh8 27.♞xf7+ ♔g8 28.♞xe5 ♙xb4 29.♞xd7 ♞xd7 30.♞e4**. White has liquidated the black bishop pair and is a healthy pawn up.



Euwe-Alekhine
Netherlands 1937

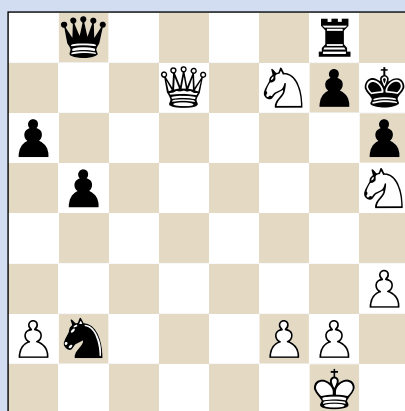
White should have started with the powerful **28.e6!** ♜xe6 Now after 28...fxe6 29.♙a6!, 29...♙e5 allows a fork. **29.♞g6+ ♔g8 30.♞e7+ ♔f8 31.♞xc8 ♞xg5 32.♙xc5+** and White is a piece up.

Readers are invited to send in brilliant missed opportunities by titled players to: afekchess@gmail.com



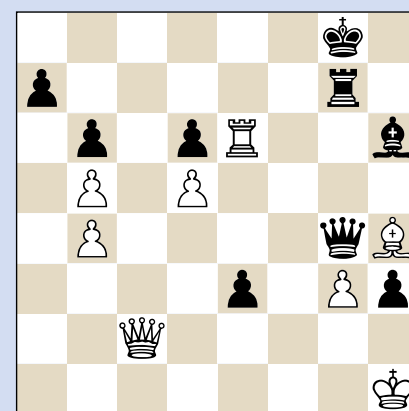
Shirov-Kramnik
Groningen 1993

The astounding **21...♙xc3!!** would have refuted White's ingenious idea altogether. **22.bxc3** allows mate in two, while **22.♙xc3 ♜xg7** is almost as trivial.



Tal-Antoshin
Moscow 1957

One would expect the Magician from Riga not to miss **31.♙f5+ g6 32.♙d7!** A switch-back often seen in compositions. **32...gxh5 33.♞g5+ ♔g6 34.♙f7+** A second knight is given up to complete the mating net.



Piket-Kasparov
Linares 1997

40...♙c7!! A difficult quiet move in time-trouble. **41.♙g6+** Or **41.♙g6+ ♙xg6 42.♙xg6+ ♔h7 43.♙e6 ♙c2**. No better is **41.♙e8+ ♙f8 42.♙e4 ♙d1+ 43.♙h2 ♙c2+ 44.♙xh3 ♙f1+ 45.♙g4 ♙c4. 41...♙g7 42.♙xg4 ♙xc2 43.♙f6 ♙f7 44.♙xg7 e2** Game over.



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‘Ljubo’

A loner trying to find his own way

When I entered the international chess arena, I got to know two Ljubomirs. The Czech grandmaster Lubomir Kavalek was generally addressed as Luboš, while Ljubomir Ljubojevic went through life as Ljubo – first name and family name combined. Ljubo was born on November 2nd, 1950, in a place called Uzice, more than 100 kilometres south of Belgrade. At the time it was called Titové Uzice, similarly to Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, whose then name was Titograd.

Yugoslavia had not yet disintegrated, and Tito still had a lot of prestige. Yugoslav chess life was mainly concentrated in Belgrade, so as a junior player Ljubo was somewhat isolated. He also just fell outside the big group of top players born in 1951, although he was closer to them than to the older generation. Ljubo was six months older than Karpov and Andersson, and two-and-a-half years younger than Hübner. He was

Ljubomir Ljubojevic achieved his biggest successes when Yugoslavia was still one country and a chess super-power. Brilliantly gifted, ‘Ljubo’ won prizes all around the globe and reached third place in the world rankings. He is a unique character in the motley crew that the chess elite is; creative, original, talkative, emotional, explosive and warm.

Jan Timman profiles one of his strongest rivals. A fellow-globetrotter with a special talent. ‘I believe that, after Kasparov and Karpov, I have learned the most from him.’

a loner in all respects, restlessly travelling the world from a young age. In chess, he always tried to find his own way. Yugoslavia had a number of grandmasters that were champions of the draw, especially Trifunovic, Matanovic and Parma. They thought they understood the game so well that they didn’t need to exert themselves. In 15-round tournaments, they tried to make all their games end in draws. Their knowledge of opening theory was extensive and their fighting spirit inversely proportional.

There were exceptions: Velimirovic was a fighter who lustily sacrificed pieces. Ivkov was a strong grandmaster who impressed internationally, and Gligoric was the icon of Yugoslav chess. You could say that Ljubo was destined to become Gligoric’s successor. There were differences between them from the very start. Gligoric played a classical kind of chess based on the prevailing strategic rules, whereas Ljubojevic’s play was original from the beginning: direct, sometimes attacking, but not based on clear strategic guidelines. Gli-

A black and white photograph of a man, Ljubomir Ljubojevic, sitting at a chessboard. He is wearing a dark leather jacket over a light-colored, vertically striped shirt. He has dark hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. His hands are resting on the chessboard, which is filled with chess pieces. The background is dark and out of focus, with some light spots visible on the right side.

Ljubomir Ljubojevic
was destined to become
the successor of
Svetozar Gligoric, the
icon of Yugoslav chess.



In 1976 Ljubojevic won the Hoogovens tournament in Wijk aan Zee.

Countless successes but no Candidate

A brief look at his imposing tournament record suffices to see that it is **almost a miracle** that Ljubomir Ljubojevic never played a prominent role in the World Championship cycle. In the 1970s and 80s he finished first in **an incredible number** of top events, including Las Palmas 1975, Manila 1975, Wijk aan Zee 1976, Sao Paulo 1979, Buenos Aires 1979, Linares 1985 and Belgrade 1987. Both in Brussels 1987 and Barcelona 1989 he **shared first place with Kasparov**. In 1984 and the first half of 1985 he was **ranked third in the world** behind Kasparov and Karpov. Yet he never was a Candidate for the world title. Twelve times he represented Yugoslavia at the Olympiad. In 1972 he won the **gold medal on Board 3**, in 1982 bronze on Board 1. In 1993 'Ljubo' was the **overall winner in the second Amber blindfold and rapid tournament** in Monaco.

goric was well-versed in chess theory, whereas Ljubo always tried to come up with new ideas in the opening. In his first game against Portisch, the great theoretician, he met 1.d4 with 1... b5. He quickly lost that game, but not because of the opening. An impulsive action cost him dearly.

Remarkably enough, Ljubo never played in the Junior World Championship. In Barcelona in 1965 Kurajica was the Yugoslav representative and he won the tournament. Two years later, the tournament was played in Jerusalem, just after the Six-Day War. There was a junior player from Romania, but the rest of the Eastern Bloc stayed away for political reasons. Ljubo's last chance was Stockholm 1969, where Karpov ruled the roost. But Yugoslavia was represented there by Vujacic, who scored less than 50 per cent in the final group and has never scored any significant results since.

All in all, Ljubo did not do very well that year. In the Yugoslav championship he finished in the bottom group. At the European Junior Championship in Groningen he did better, finishing second, immediately behind the winner Andras Adorjan. Ljubo's breakthrough came in 1971, when he finally managed to bring his enterprising play to bear. He disguised his lack of knowledge of opening theory by playing his own variations. After finishing second in a strongly contested tournament in Vrnjačka Banja he was made a grandmaster.

In those days, players rarely became grandmasters before their 20th birthday. Only Fischer and Mecking had managed this. When I was made a grandmaster in 1974, I was 22. That made me the youngest grandmaster but one, after Mecking, who was born a month later.

The first time I saw Ljubo was in Malaga, at the start of 1971. We were both playing in the annual Costa del Sol tournament. I was accompanied by two friends from Holland, while

Ljubo often hung out with Quinteros from Argentina. I had the impression that he didn't talk and gesticulate so excitedly as he did in later years, but maybe this is because we did not see each other much. In some respects we came from different worlds: I was a typical product of my time, a long-haired youngster who liked beat music and rock & roll. We drank quite a bit, but mostly we were stoned. I had taken a piece of hashish to Malaga, simply by putting it into the waistcoat-pocket of my jacket. They didn't look for those things at Schiphol airport in those days. Ljubo had no time for such stimulants. He did not smoke, and if he drank at all, he drank only a little. Two separate worlds, but we had one thing in common: wandering restlessly through the world, from tournament to tournament. I had the impression that he was even more restless than me, because I sometimes returned to my home base in Amsterdam, the psychedelic centre and hippie Valhalla of Europe.

I won our first encounter convincingly, and a year later, in Wijk aan Zee, I also managed to beat him in spectacular fashion. But this did not at all mean that he was going to be my 'client'. In the early 70s, Ljubo developed far more rapidly than me, so he inflicted some crushing defeats on me as well. He was already playing in prestigious top tournaments, while I took refuge in the former Soviet Union, where you could only earn a handful of roubles that could not be exchanged for Western currency. I did win a reasonably strong tournament in Sombor, however, together with Gulko, who did not receive invitations for the strongest tournaments for a different reason. One night I was sitting at the hotel bar with IMs Hartoch and Minic, the first one from the Netherlands, the second one from Yugoslavia. Hartoch was saying that I was, in fact, a far better player than Ljubo. I was flattered and even touched by Robbie's praise. But I didn't agree, and Minic didn't either. Ljubo was simply better, and would remain

so for another three years. I sometimes consoled myself with the thought that I was the strongest hash-smoking chess player in the world, but unfortunately there were no prizes for that.

Hübner already qualified for the Candidates' matches in 1970, a confirmation of his status as a top player. Ljubo's results fell little short of those of the German player, but he consistently disappointed in the Interzonal

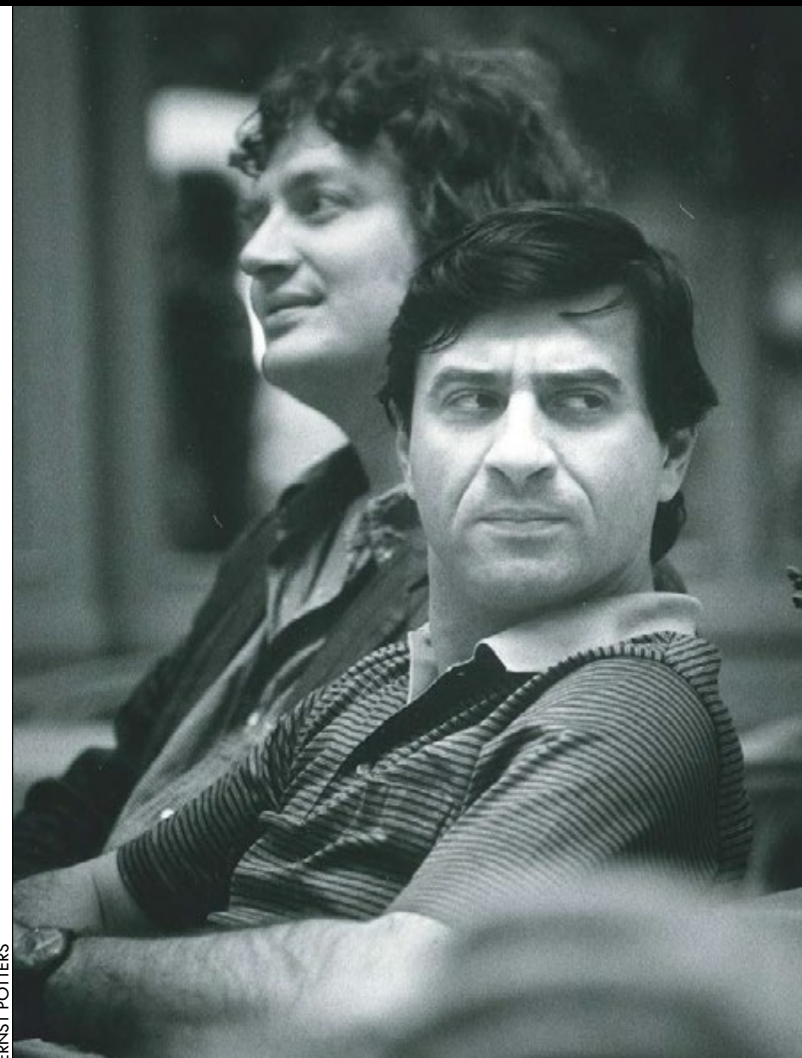
'Ljubo often asked me if what he played was theory. Sometimes I could say yes, sometimes not.'

tournaments of the 70s. In Petropolis, Brazil, he finished halfway the table, and three years later, in Manila, his result was little better. Maybe his expectations were too high, but there may have been different reasons for Ljubo's symptomatic failures in Interzonal tournaments. It seemed that his lack of systematic opening preparation was coming back to haunt him. During top tournaments, Ljubo often asked me if what he played was theory. Sometimes I could say yes, sometimes not. The remarkable thing was that, during top tournaments, he managed to camouflage his lack of homework with his improvising skills and his keen sense for certain openings. But in qualification tournaments it was of paramount importance to be well prepared. Modern IMs are usually well abreast of theoretical developments. In those days, they were not.

There were no databases, and it was possible to defeat the weaker brothers in the opening. Ljubo was forced to improvise continually. This usually leads to over-exertion in a tournament. Later Ljubo said about his lack of success in Manila: 'Frankly, that was a combination of various objective and subjective circumstances. I believe that the time had come for me to become a Candidate for the World Championship. I myself set this aim, but it is very difficult to play when you are aiming to achieve something specific. I overworked during my preparations. I also think that I mistimed my peak condition. I reached top form before the Manila Interzonal'.

If you are not used to working on openings, it is very easy to find yourself up dead ends, making your efforts counterproductive. His allusion to this mysterious phenomenon of 'form' is interesting. How do you achieve it and what can you do to hold on to it? Ljubo implicitly admits that he suffered from instability. This was, in fact, one of the weaknesses of most of the top players of my generation. Only Karpov always managed to maintain his form.

Ljubo spoke these words during the first super-tournament in Bugojno 1978. Virtually the entire world top was there, including Karpov, Spassky, Tal, Larsen, Hübner, Hort and Gligoric. I was there as well, and I finished a creditable third, behind Karpov and Spassky. Ljubo had beaten Spassky in the first round, but after that things got stickier. In Round 6, he found himself in a losing position as Black against the Bosnian grandmaster Bukic. He ended up winning the game after an incident that caused him some moral damage. Bukic had recorded Black's 17th and his own 18th move twice. Ljubo noticed this at some stage, whereupon he decided to write down the white and black moves twice as well – with the result that after 39 moves Bukic thought that he had made the time-control. With two minutes left he started thinking about the best way to convert his advantage, happily letting



With Jan Timman at the 1986 Ohra Tournament in Amsterdam.

his flag drop. Then Ljubo got busy. He first went to the board boys, who manually kept track of everything on large demonstration boards: the moves with big, hinged numbers and letters, the time on clocks with moveable hands. The board boys usually followed the players' score sheets, so it was to be expected that they had already registered 40 moves, all the more so because Bukic must have glanced at the demonstration board occasionally. But in the tournament book Ljubo writes that the board boys had registered 39 moves. However this may be, Ljubo quickly established that not enough moves had been played. He told Bukic and offered him a draw. Bukic told him: 'Leave me in peace', whereupon Ljubo called the arbiters, including Najdorf, and had the game reconstructed. When Bukic realized that they had only played 39 moves, he declared himself prepared to accept a draw after all, but the arbiters were adamant: Black had won on regulatory grounds. Later Ljubo had this to say about the incident: 'At one point during the game I noticed that I had recorded one move less than my

opponent. I was in a difficult situation and did not want to lose time to look for the mistake, assuming that my opponent had recorded his moves correctly...' But he still felt bad about it. Afterwards I wrote in *Schaakbulletin*: 'Later, Ljubojevic was smitten by remorse. (...) During dinner, the otherwise so brisk and cheerful Yugoslav was staring ahead dejectedly and sometimes expressed his feelings about the incident; a pathetic torrent of self-pity. He had been unable to sleep that night, he said the following day'.

A few days later, his mood was not improved when Yugoslav television broadcast a live interview with Bent Larsen. Larsen sharply condemned Ljubo's action, explaining that he had been unable to play well during his last two games because of this 'very dirty trick' of Ljubo's. I was with Ljubo when the interview was broadcast. He was quite shaken. It's not very pleasant to be called a cheat in your own country.

Looking back, I think Larsen's reaction was out of proportion, because what are you supposed to do in a situation in which you notice that your opponent has recorded an extra move? It is more normal for someone to forget a move than to record it twice. In principle, Bukic had nothing to do with his opponent's score sheet. During the Yerevan Olympiad of 1996 I once saw a Georgian player writing down a whole series of moves that had never been played. All he wanted was to hoodwink his opponent, who was in extreme time-trouble and had stopped recording his moves. The idea was that, after

a look at his opponent's score sheet, he might think that he had made it to the safety of the time-control. Very reprehensible behaviour by the Georgian, but here the principle that his opponent had no business with his score sheet applied as well. I do think, however, that Ljubo's action was caused, possibly unconsciously, by his fear of losing. In unclear positions he sometimes suddenly offered a draw, very clearly because he was afraid. It seems to me that this deep-rooted insecurity has hampered Ljubo's career.

Later that year, in the second Interpolis tournament in Tilburg, I managed to beat Ljubo again after many years. It was a confirmation of my position in the chess world: with two strong tournament victories I had overtaken Ljubo in the world rankings. We hung out with one another sometimes. During the tournament we stayed in a hotel in the Oisterwijk woods. On one of the rest days he asked me to accompany him to the village, he wanted to buy fitted sheets for his apartment in Belgrade. It was a curious trip: two globetrotters on their way to a village shop for bedclothes. A few years later, Ljubo probably didn't need those sheets anymore. During the traditional tournament in Linares he met a Spanish woman, whom he married and who would give him two sons. His marriage indirectly strengthened his friendship ties with Ulf Andersson – now both had a Spanish-speaking wife. During the 80s it was a familiar scene during

tournaments: the Spanish Aracella and the Cuban Lourdes pleasantly chatting at a table, while their husbands made long walks, during which Ljubo did most of the talking, also in Spanish. It has been said that Ulf and I often agreed quick draws when we played, but our number of draws pales into insignificance compared to what Ljubo and Ulf did. In Wijk aan Zee, in 1976, Ljubo had won a magnificent attacking game against Ulf, which I have extensively annotated in *The Art of Chess Analysis*. Their next 36 tournament games were all draws, mostly very short ones, with only three games lasting for more than 30 moves.

If Ljubo had chosen Seville as his home base, he would probably have become a more stay-at-home husband. But Linares is a provincial town where you don't want to stay for too long. As a result Ljubo continued to travel from tournament to tournament. Yet the stability of his marriage was good for him. 1982 was probably Ljubo's best year. He beat Karpov for the first time. This was very important to him, because up to then he had lost eight games against the World Champion and drawn seven. During the following 10 years, their score was 6-6, with 12 draws, and this in Karpov's best years. In that same decade I never managed to beat Karpov even once. Ljubo had woven an interesting mixture of strategy and dynamics into his play that Karpov obviously found hard to deal with. Against Kasparov, however, Ljubo always struggled. He was prob-



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ably intimidated by his opponent's impressive preparation.

After Ljubo's first victory against Karpov I realized that I would be able to learn a lot from his play. Other players of my generation, such as Ribli, could also play instructive games, but for me they did not contain new viewpoints. Ljubo understood things that other

seconds. When Ljubo spotted Geller in the Cervantes Hotel, he was livid. Rentero had left him completely in the dark about this. Ljubo was so angry that he not only refused to play the tournament himself, but was even prepared to pay other participants to withdraw. This is a curious streak in Ljubo. He is generally very good company: sharp yet friendly, witty and to the point. But

established as an independent organization. Ljubo immediately became an enthusiastic and committed committee member. Shortly after the tournament, Ljubo and I, together with Bessel Kok, the SWIFT CEO, went on a promotion tour to Thailand and Japan. In Tokyo, Ljubo knew the way. He had been there in 1976, when Fischer and Karpov were negotiating

'He not only refused to play himself, but was even prepared to pay other participants to withdraw.'



At the prize-giving in Linares in 1985 together with Spanish GM Manuel Rivas and organizer Luis Rentero.

players didn't. I believe that, after Kasparov and Karpov, I have learned the most from him. When Ljubo scored the best first-board result at the Luzern Olympiad, he rose to third place in the January 1983 Elo-list, behind Karpov and Kasparov. A glorious future seemed to beckon, but it never materialized. After a conflict with the organizers of Linares Ljubo withdrew from the tournament. As an inhabitant of the town he had also worked on the organization. In Luzern he had promised Tal a place in the tournament. He had urged Rentero, the main organizer, not to accept any other Soviet player except Tal. Like Putin, the officials of the Soviet chess federation couldn't care less what people in the West thought of them. They invariably sent their own choice of grandmasters to top tournaments, usually Karpov's

when he gets really upset, all reason tends to go out of the window.

In this case his implacable stance backfired. He had not played in one of the Interzonal tournaments the year before, which meant that the Candidates' matches also started without him. Instead of joining the absolute world top, Ljubo found himself in a vacuum.

Ljubo scored his best results in the 80s. He won the second SWIFT tournament in Brussels in 1987 together with Kasparov, and two years later he did possibly even better in the Barcelona World Cup tournament, where he again shared the highest honour with the World Champion. That second SWIFT tournament was a memorable event in all respects. Just before the tournament, the GMA, the Grandmasters' Association, had been

about a possible match. One evening, when Bessel had other things to do, Ljubo and I decided to go to Rappongi, the entertainment district for foreigners. We took the underground. 'We have to get off at the sixth stop,' said Ljubo. It was important not to forget this, because all the names of the stations were in Japanese. We went to the Charleston bar, frequented by all kinds of employees from the various embassies. Later we found ourselves in several discos, in the company of an American dance group that paid all the bills that night. The sun was already up when we undertook the long walk back to our hotel.

During GMA meetings, Ljubo was often volatile. He might fervently espouse a certain viewpoint, only to reject it out of hand at the next meeting, a few months later. But he was usually

prepared to drop his objections if other people didn't agree with him. He once tried, for example, to convince me that Euwe was Jewish. This was something Fischer must have told him in Tokyo. I patiently explained that during World War II there was talk about Euwe being made Lord Mayor of Amsterdam, which in itself made it impossible that

hide behind a car. The artist was not fooled. Curious as to how the chess player was going to extricate himself from this situation, he did not go inside but dawdled in front of his house. After a while Ljubo emerged from behind the car with an air of 'I was just passing, nice to see you.' Jeroen found the situation quite entertaining, he didn't

pion. During the final banquet, however, things were presented in a very different light. Kasparov was called to the stage as the great winner. Only his praises were sung. In the background, Ljubo was getting more and more worked up. This time he had every reason to be angry. In the country where he had already lived for eight years and

'Kasparov was called to the stage as the great winner. In the background, Ljubo was getting more and more worked up.'



In 2006 Ljubomir Ljubojevic drew both his games against 16-year-old Magnus Carlsen at the NH Tournament in Amsterdam.

he was Jewish. Ljubo accepted this and stopped talking about it.

He sometimes came up with wild ideas during a meeting. We were talking about finding sponsors, one of the recurrent themes of our discussions. 'We should get the Sultan of Brunei interested in chess, he is the richest man on earth!' Ljubo put forward enthusiastically, continuing to try to get us fired up for this idea. 'Maybe I also know a Sultan somewhere, or was it a Sheikh?' John Nunn observed to general laughter.

During the time of the GMA, Ljubo threw himself into Amsterdam life with great panache. One afternoon he had a date with the daughter of the artist Jeroen Henneman, who still lived with her father in the south of the city. When Ljubo had rang the bell, he saw Jeroen walking home. That was not part of Ljubo's plan, so he decided to

have the slightest objection against the date. Later we dined in Jeroen's home. As always, Ljubo did most of the talking. 'Does he always speak so staccato?' Jeroen asked me afterwards. I nodded. Regardless of whether the conversation was in Serbo-Croatian, English or Spanish, Ljubo's contributions were always equally emphatic.

I already mentioned that the Barcelona World Cup tournament in 1989 was Ljubo's greatest victory. On paper, Kasparov was co-winner, but he collected fewer Grand Prix points for the overall World Cup standings. Illescas had participated hors concours as the local representative. Ljubo had drawn against him, while Kasparov had beaten him. This meant that Ljubo had scored half a point more for the World Cup rankings, for which Illescas' results didn't count, so by rights he was the big winner, ahead of the World Cham-

whose language he spoke fluently, he was summarily pushed aside, his triumph disregarded. Eyewitnesses report that Ljubo was shaking with rage. At some point, Kortchnoi made the kind of mocking remark that he is known for, but when he saw Ljubo's reaction, he decided to make a quick getaway.

This story had its sequel a few months later. During the next World Cup tournament in Rotterdam, the quarterly news of the GMA appeared, with on its front page the tournament table of Barcelona. Kasparov was in first place. The GMA employee responsible for the quarterly news had undoubtedly done this in good faith and only for reasons of alphabetical order. And without the events at the final banquet in Barcelona, Ljubo would probably have accepted it as such. But the past refused to leave him alone. He got terribly worked up and

decided to leave the tournament. Upon hearing this, I asked Ulf Andersson to accompany me to Ljubo's hotel room. When we came in, Ljubo was just finishing packing his suitcases. It took us some time to prevail on him to change his mind. We were lucky in that we had talked for such a long time that he would be unable to catch the flight he had booked for himself. As in Linares, it struck me that Ljubo had again queered his own pitch by his impulsive actions. What organizers do or what people publish is of little consequence; you should just sit down at the board, especially when things are going your way.

The GMA's first World Cup cycle in 1988-89 was a great success, but the preparations for the second cycle did not proceed smoothly. Kasparov did not participate. He was already turning his back on the GMA. Later he would deal the organization the death blow. The first tournament of the second cycle was held in Reykjavik in the autumn of 1991, but the prize-fund came from SWIFT. Bessel had been asked to step in with the sponsoring before, in Rotterdam, and it looked as if he would have to do this another few times during this second cycle. After my return from Reykjavik, Bessel told me something in confidence: the second cycle would have to be aborted. Bessel was not in a position to help out financially again. This was a big blow for me, but I understood that Bessel's decision was irreversible. Without his help, the first cycle would not have been such a success, and if we could no longer count on his support, the risk of continuing would be unacceptable. And there was something else that was bothering me. During the Interpolis tournament, just after Reykjavik, I often hung out with Ljubo, but because Bessel had told me about his decision in confidence, I could not talk about it. Bessel was also present in Tilburg, but he was apparently unwilling to take Ljubo into his confidence. One month later, the committee meeting of the GMA took place in Paris. Bessel's decision came up for

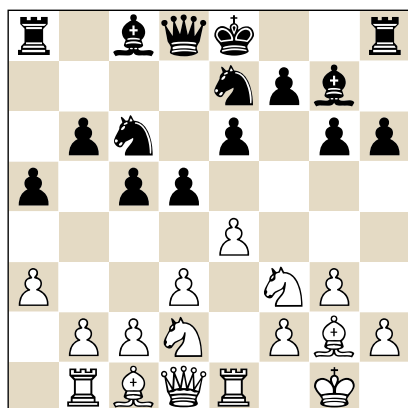
discussion, and Ljubo was beside himself. He refused to accept the discontinuation of the cycle and submitted a motion asking for it to continue. He had little support. I abstained and the other four committee members voted against. Nigel Short compared the situation to a Monty Python sketch in which a man comes to a vet with a dead parrot asking if anything can be done for the bird. The second cycle was just as dead as the parrot. After the meeting Ljubo vented his anger mainly on me. Why had I not told him anything about Bessel's decision in Tilburg? Then he could have taken immediate action to save the cycle. I told him that Bessel had informed me of his decision in confidence. 'Ah, Bessel,' he said. I could understand Ljubo's disappointment. He reckoned that the trust between us two should have come first. It is always difficult to argue with someone in such a state. I could have told him that he would have been unable to save the cycle anyway, because he had failed to get the committee behind him, not to mention Bessel himself. Instead I just shrugged my shoulders. Then Ljubo started spreading a malicious story: it was me who had arranged for the cycle to be aborted, because of my bad result in Reykjavik. Ljubo again showed how unreasonable he could become if he got upset. And it was interesting that he attributed so much power to me. Again, there was little I could do except shrug my shoulders. What can you do when someone spreads silly rumours about you? The situation changed when Yasser Seirawan gave Ljubo's story a prominent place in his editorial in *Inside Chess*. I wrote a sharply worded letter to the editor, in which I asked Yasser whether he believed the story himself. Why else would an editor-in-chief give it a place in his editorial without distancing himself from it? If I remember correctly, Yasser was of the opinion that Ljubo's opinion should be aired. It seems to me that he should have protected Ljubo against himself by not publishing it. Unless he believed that nonsense himself.

It goes without saying that this affair did nothing to enhance my relationship with Ljubo, although things smoothed down a bit over time. We stopped hanging out and we didn't see each other very often, since both of us were increasingly rare visitors to top tournaments. And Ljubo was gradually withdrawing from competitive chess, although he remained a frequent visitor of tournaments, where he treated the pressroom to outspoken opinions about the games that were being played.

If he played himself, he still did very well sometimes, for example in the NH tournament in Amsterdam 2006, where he successfully held his own against Carlsen, Karjakin and other youthful stars. He did even better in the Crown Group in Wijk aan Zee two years later. In the ex-winners' tournament he finished ahead of Kortchnoi, Portisch and me. He had lost against me in the first round, but then went on to score 4 out of 5. During the traditional pea-soup dinner to close the festival, I shared a table with Kortchnoi and Portisch. 'It is incredible that this amateur has won, ahead of us professionals,' Kortchnoi said. I had to chuckle – another typically venomous Kortchnoi remark. It was true, during our careers, the three of us had spent many more hours in our studies than Ljubo, but this didn't make his achievement any the less impressive. A journalist asked Ljubo why he did not play more often. 'Because I am getting no invitations', replied Ljubo. This is indeed a problem. You can play B-groups like me or, even worse, participate in obscure open tournaments like Ulf Andersson, but if you're not prepared to do this, there is nothing else left.

Late last January, I saw Ljubo during the Zurich Chess Challenge. He dropped by as a chess tourist and was even taking photos. As always, he was walking around energetically and seemed a dab hand with the camera. But I still thought I would have preferred to see him sitting at a chessboard.

Ljubo in his own moves



Ljubojevic-Petrosian
Milan 1975
position after 10...a5

The 1975 Milan tournament is best known for the spectacular way in which Andersson defeated Karpov. It was the latter's first defeat as World Champion, and it took a good while before he suffered his second one. The tournament was played in a format that would become quite popular: the first four players were pitted against each other in four-game matches to determine the eventual winner. In one semi-final, Karpov beat Petrosian, while Ljubo lost against Portisch. Karpov then lived up to expectations by defeating Portisch, but the fight for third place led to a surprise: Ljubo beat Petrosian. In the diagrammed position, Ljubo has

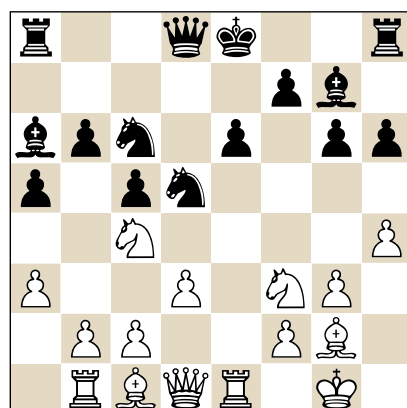
opted for a closed position against the French, a kind of reversed King's Indian. **11.h4!** Play on both wings.

11...♘a6 Not exactly wrong, but a move that gives your opponent starting-points. Petrosian clearly wants to keep the option of castling queenside. But if Black isn't careful, his queen's bishop will be sidelined.

In his second game against Ljubo in Milan he had played 11...a4, and after 12.exd5 exd5! he could develop his queen's bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal.

12.exd5 The right moment to break the central tension.

12...♞xd5 In this situation, 12...exd5 is less good. After 13.♞f1 0-0 14.♞f4 White will exert pressure on the black position. **13.♞c4**

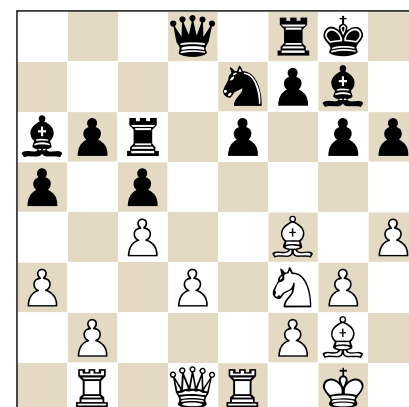


13...0-0? A mechanical move, after which White has a clear advantage. Black should have played 13...♞c7!

for control of square e5. **14.♞ce5!** White exploits this immediately, starting an action that will eventually yield him a decisive space advantage on the queenside.

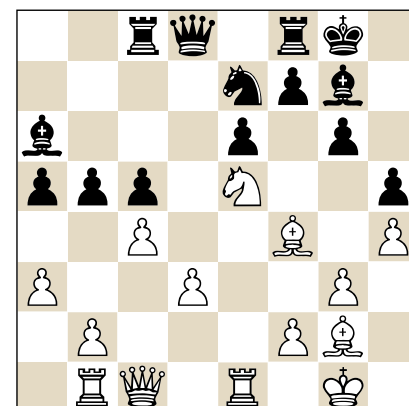
14...♞c8 15.♞xc6 ♞xc6 16.c4 ♞e7 17.♞f4

White is ready to advance his b-pawn.



17...b5 This only strengthens the white advance.

18.♞c1 h5 19.♞e5 ♞c8



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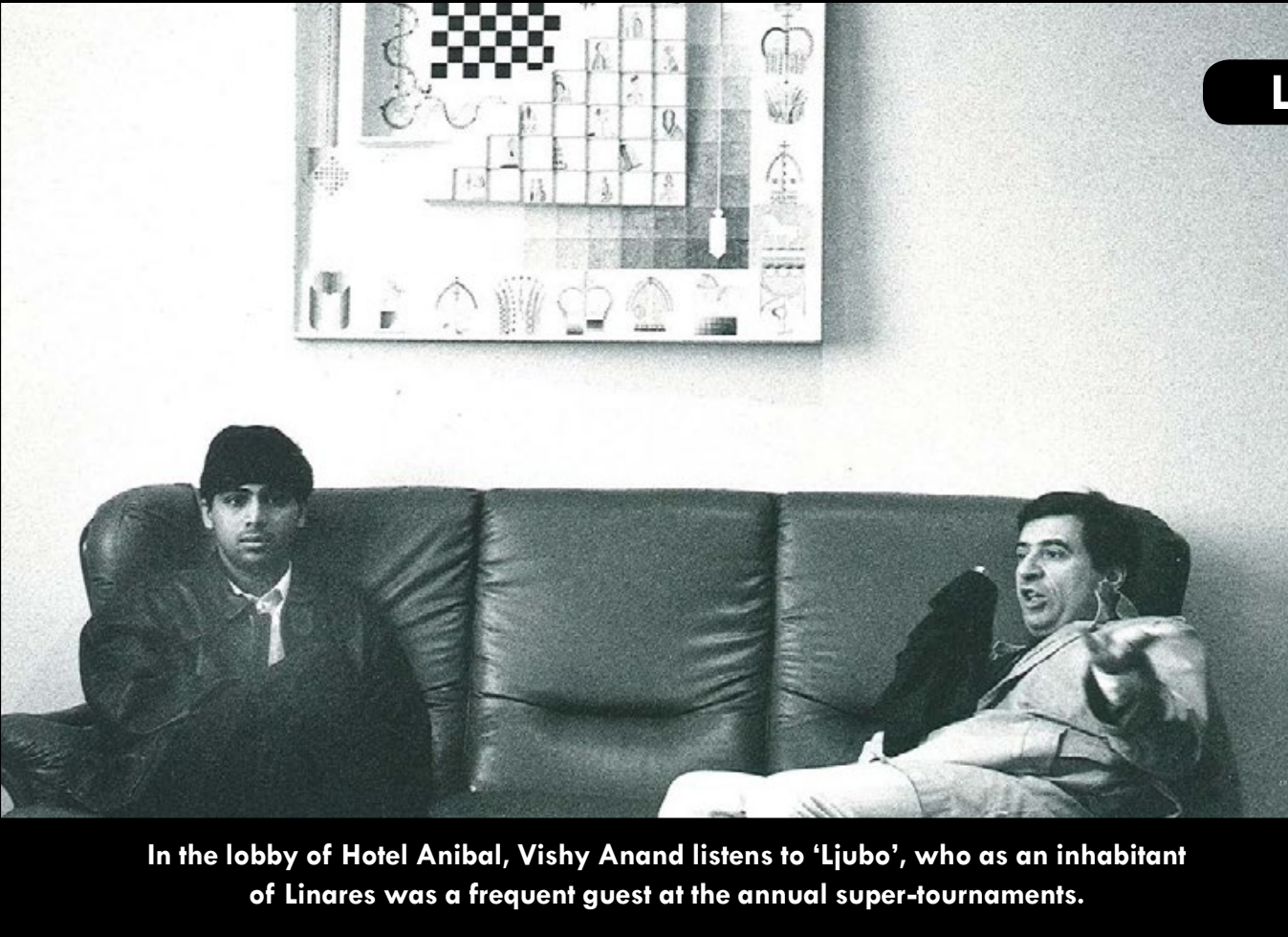
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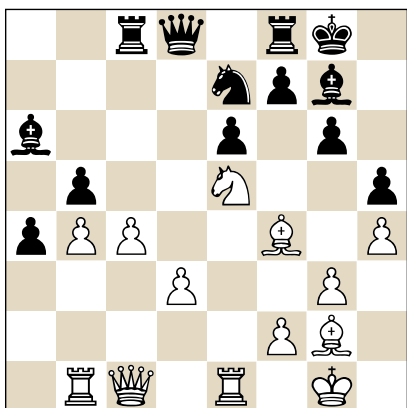
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In the lobby of Hotel Anibal, Vishy Anand listens to 'Ljubo', who as an inhabitant of Linares was a frequent guest at the annual super-tournaments.

20.b4! White's play is mainly based on the bad position of the black queen's bishop. After 20...bxc4, 21.b5 is decisive.

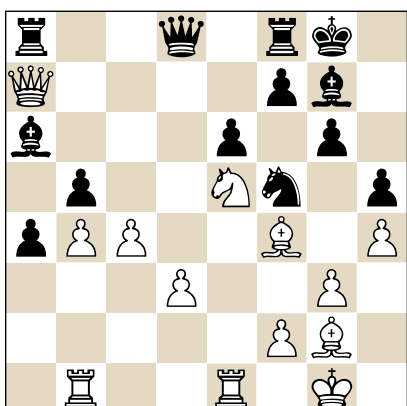
20...cxb4 21.axb4 a4



22.♔e3! Very strong. The queen is on its way to a7.

22...♟f5 23.♔a7 ♖a8

Typically Petrosian. He is prepared to give an exchange for some positional compensation.



24.♞c5!

But Ljubo rejects the offer and continues to ratchet up the pressure on the enemy position.

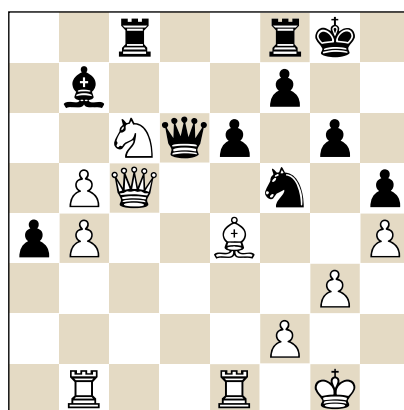
24...♞c8 25.♞c6 ♞d7 26.cxb5 ♞b7

The intermediate move 26...♞d4 would have offered Black better chances of defending himself.

27.♞e5!

Neutralizing the king's bishop.

27...♞xe5 28.♞xe5 ♞d8 29.♞c6 ♞xd3 30.♞e4 ♞d6



31.♞xd6?

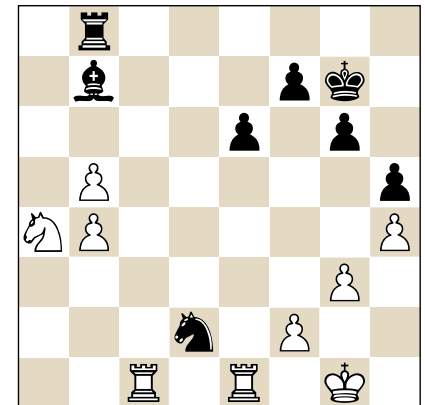
A pity. Ljubo miscalculates in a totally winning position. After 31.♞xf5 ♞xc5 32.bxc5 ♞xc6 33.♞h3 ♞d5 34.♞ec1 the connected passed pawns would have guaranteed an easy win. If Ljubo had rounded off like this, it would have been a model game.

31...♞xd6 32.♞e7+ ♞g7 33.♞xc8

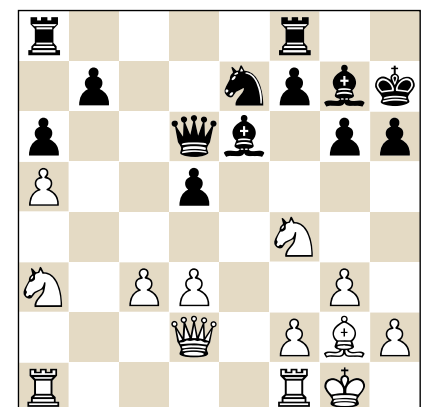
♞xe4 34.♞b6 ♞d2 35.♞xa4 ♞b8?

Petrosian returns the compliment in time-trouble: 35...♞xb1 36.♞xb1 ♞a8 would have enabled him to hold the endgame.

36.♞bc1!



With this accurate move White secures victory after all. Black must win back the exchange in unfavourable circumstances, since the white king is now far safer.



Larsen-Ljubojevic

Brussels 1987

position after 19. bxc3

This game was played in the 1987 SWIFT tournament in Brussels, one of the finest successes in Ljubo's career. A Closed Sicilian has led to a position with clear strategic features. Black has an isolated d-pawn, and after the advance of its white counterpart Black's pawn is in danger of becoming weak. The white bishop in particular is exerting optimum pressure on d5. As against this, Black has the bishop pair and the white a-pawn will be hard to protect.

19...♞c7

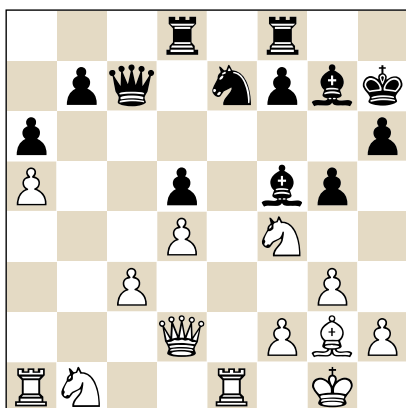
Direct play. Black attacks the a-pawn.

20. ♖b1

'Forced', Plaskett observes in the tournament book. The computer does not agree, opining that after 20.d4 ♕xa5 21. ♖c2 ♕c7 22. ♖e1 White will have sufficient compensation for the pawn. But I don't think many players would be prepared to sacrifice a pawn like this.

20... ♖ad8 21.d4 ♗f5 22. ♖e1 g5!

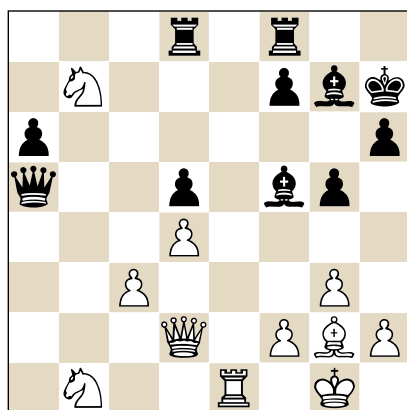
Ljubo is very good in positions in which he can take the initiative. He has calculated that this advance does not materially weaken his king's position.



23. ♖d3

Plaskett calls this knight move 'one of the most curious mistakes of the tournament'. This is overstating the case, especially in view of the fact that the computer regards it as simply the best move. So although the exchange sacrifice 23. ♖xe7 ♕xe7 24. ♖xd5 may look good at the first glance, objectively speaking it gives Black a large advantage. Ljubo had planned 24... ♕e6, intending to meet 25. ♖e3 with 25... ♗e4. Plaskett indicates 25.c4 (instead of 25. ♖e3) to keep his knight on d5 and redeploy the other one via c3. White's central superiority looks impressive, but Black has a way to circumvent it and give his bishop pair free rein with 25... ♖fe8 26. ♖bc3 ♗g6!, followed by 27... ♕f5, and the black queen penetrates via c2 or d3. This especially weakens the white d-pawn. There is no doubt that Ljubo would have found this plan.

23... ♖c6 24. ♖c5 ♖xa5 25. ♖xa5 ♕xa5 26. ♖xb7



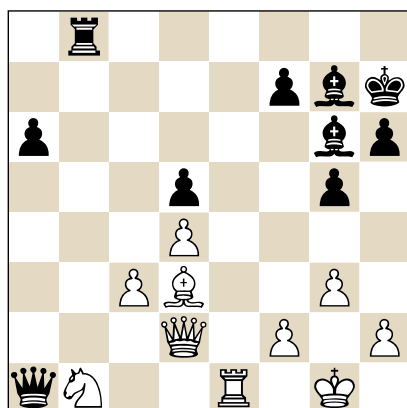
26... ♕a1!

The queen penetrates.

27. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 28. ♗f1 ♖b8

29. ♗d3 ♗g6

An important finesse. Black is prepared to swap bishops, but strictly on his own terms.



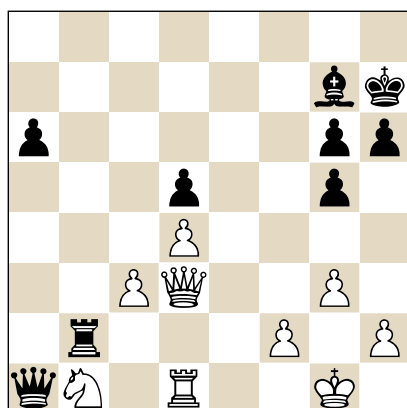
30. ♗xg6+?

The decisive error. 30. ♕e3 was called for to redeploy White's knight via d2, after which Black is only marginally better.

30... ♖xg6 31. ♕d3

White's problem is that he cannot cover his knight and his rook simultaneously, with the result that the knight that retreated earlier will no longer be able to leave its starting square.

31... ♖b2 32. ♖d1



32... g4! White is being hemmed in.

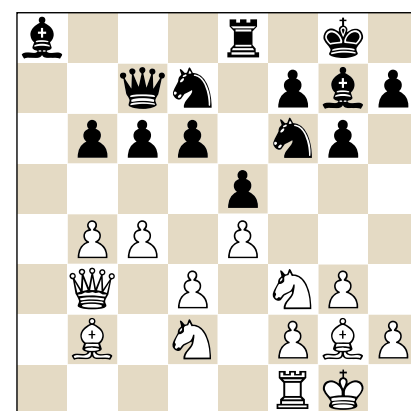
33. ♕f1 h5 34. ♕e1 ♗h6

Taking even more squares away from the white pieces.

35. ♖d2 ♖xd2

White resigned.

After this win Ljubo took the lead with 8 out of 10. In the final round, Kasparov drew level by beating Tal, while Ljubo agreed a draw with Karpov.



Ljubojevic-Karpov

Amsterdam 1988

position after 16... ♗xa8

This game was played in the 1988 VSB tournament in Amsterdam, which in that year was called Euwe Memorial. Ljubo tied for second place with Karpov, half a point behind Short.

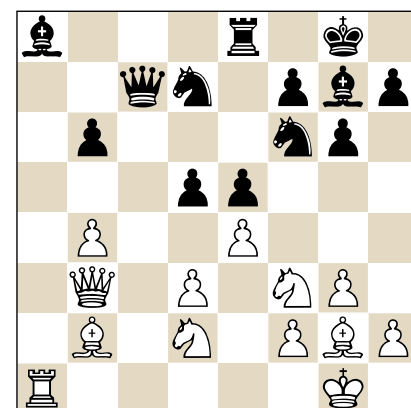
In the diagrammed position Ljubo has put up a modest fight against the Caro-Kann, roughly like the French variation against Petrosian, but has still managed to establish a slight plus in the early middlegame.

17. ♖a1 Occupying the open file.

17... d5?

Karpov is striving for full compensation in the centre, but overlooks an important finesse.

18. cxd5 cxd5





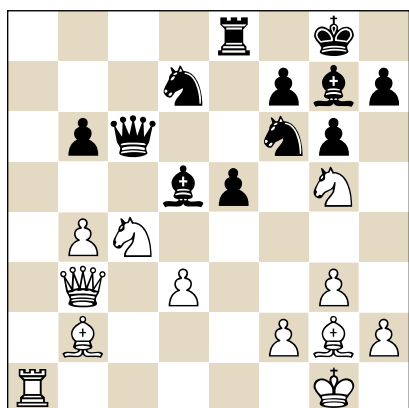
The Honorary Group in Wijk aan Zee in 2008: Lajos Portisch, Viktor Kortchnoi, Jan Timman and winner Ljubomir Ljubojevic.

TORSTEN BEHL

19. ♖g5! This knight sortie is very strong.

19... ♜d6 The only move, but this was clearly not Karpov's intention when advancing his d-pawn. After the obvious 19...h6 White has the *petite combinaison* 20. ♖xf7! ♜xf7 21. exd5, and Black has no defence against the threat of 22.d6+.

20. exd5 ♜xd5 21. ♖c4 ♜c6



22. ♖e3!

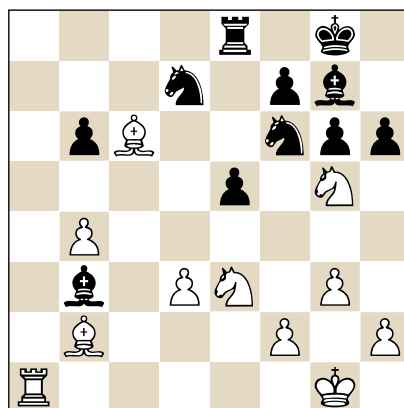
White adroitly uses two cross-pins to force a queen exchange in very favourable circumstances.

22... ♜xb3

Black's best defence was 22... ♜c1+!, but this is a desperado that is extremely hard to find. The idea is to force the white rook or queen's bishop to a less favourable square. After 23. ♜xc1 ♜xb3 24. ♖a3 ♜e6

25. ♖xe6 ♜xe6 26. ♖d5 White is superior, but Black's chances of a draw are better than in the game.

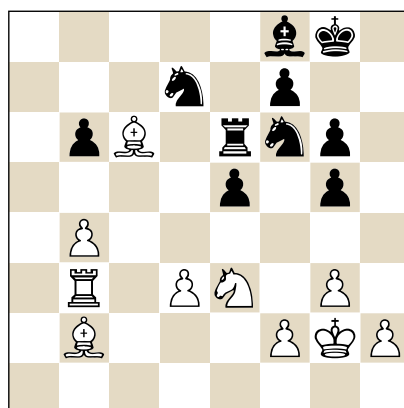
23. ♜xc6 h6



24. ♖a3!

This yields White the bishop pair without reducing the pressure on the black position.

24... ♜xg5 25. ♖xb3 ♜f8 26. ♖g2 ♜e6



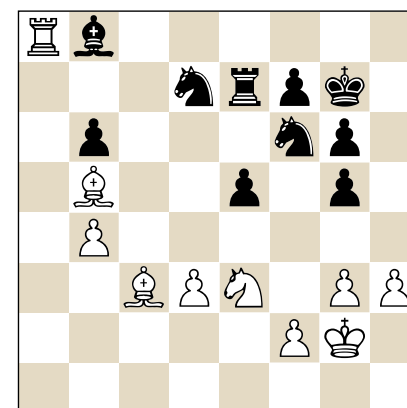
27. ♜b5!

Ljubo invariably goes for the strongest move. He uses the bishop pair like a virtuoso, similarly to his game against Khalifman in Groningen 1993, which I discuss in my book *Power Chess with Pieces*.

27... ♜g7 28. h3 ♜e7 29. ♜c3

Ever so systematic. He provides extra cover for the b-pawn and then penetrates with the rook along the a-file. In the meantime, Black is unable to develop a scintilla of counterplay.

29... ♜d6 30. ♖a3 ♜b8 31. ♖a8 ♜e7

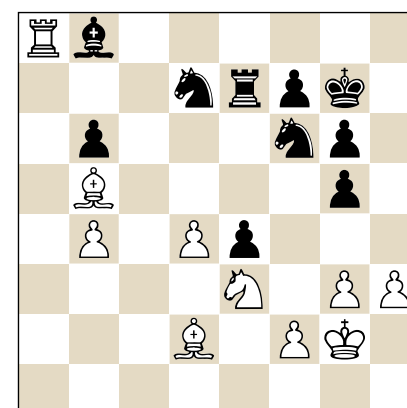


32. ♜d2!

Again the computer's first move. Black has almost no moves left. After 32... ♜c7 White will deal a devastating blow with 33. ♖a7.

32... e4 33. d4

This passed pawn is extremely strong.



33... ♜c7 34. ♖c8 ♜f8 35. ♜c3 ♜h7 36. ♜c6 ♜f8 37. b5

Black resigned.

37... ♜d6 will be met by the crushing 38. ♖c4. This was Ljubo's third win against Karpov after earlier victories in Turin in 1982 and at the 1986 Dubai Olympiad. ■



Puzzles? Must be easy!

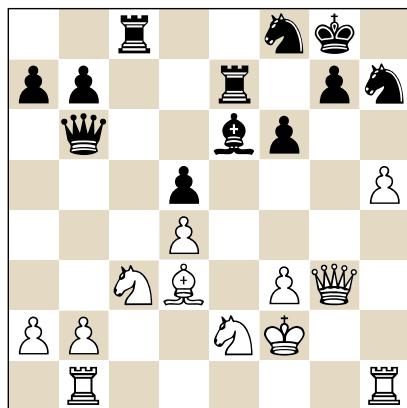
T

his issue, it's puzzle books all the way! We start off with two of Jacob Aagaard's recent books in the *Grandmaster Preparation* series: *Attack*

& *Defence* and *Endgame Play*. Both books are structured in the same way. Each chapter (13 in *Attack & Defence* and 12 in *Endgame Play*) starts with a short introduction in which Aagaard analyses a game related to the theme of the chapter, and then the reader is given between 20 and 50 exercises to solve. A good reader-friendly touch is that the exercises are grouped within the chapter into sets of 6 or 8 so you don't need to solve the whole chapter before you can safely look at the answers.

How useful are puzzles as a training aid? Absolutely crucial I think. As a struggling young GM rated around 2550, I was twice able to spend a week training with Mark Dvoretsky (thanks to my parents' sponsorship and my friend Steve Giddins' organisational skills and offer of a place to stay). I'm not a great one for taking advice from others so I was a little bit sceptical about the difference it would make. When Dvoretsky suggested we start with some exercises I wasn't too impressed. Puzzles? Must be easy!

We started off with a set of 10 positions which Dvoretsky used to gauge the level of his students. The time you had for each position varied: from a few seconds to 5 minutes. The very first position was this one from Knaak-Geller, Moscow 1982:



This one had to be solved within 30 seconds I believe. Distracted by the shaky-looking black king, I failed miserably. The correct answer is the calm **22. ♖c2!** transferring the bishop to b3 to attack the pawn on d5. Not difficult, but you need to be able to think like that. Dvoretsky looked at me with a slightly disappointed expression on his face and said: 'Kramnik solved this in 5 seconds... at the age of 12.' Right. Sinking feeling. OK. Matthew, this could be a tough week! (If you want to take the Dvoretsky test, by the way, then you can find all ten positions in the third chapter of Dvoretsky's excellent book *Positional Play* published by Batsford Books.)

During the lessons, we spent a lot of time on much more difficult exercises. These exercises – often complex studies – simply defied calculation: you couldn't hope to solve them in totality from the starting position. Dvoretsky turned these positions into a game situation. He gave me 30 minutes on the clock and I would have to play the position as if it were a real game. The goal was to encourage and

train the use of all sorts of practical thinking techniques. For example, you might be able to use elimination to narrow things down on move 1 and be able to make that move on the board. Dvoretsky would look inscrutable and make a reply and then you might have to get down to some hard calculation to get past the next couple of moves and use your judgment to decide between two options of similar merit. After making those moves on the board, you might then run up against the next critical position etc... It was a very good way to train efficient time handling, as you never

**Grandmaster
Preparation:
Attack & Defence**
by Jacob Aagaard
Quality Chess, 2014

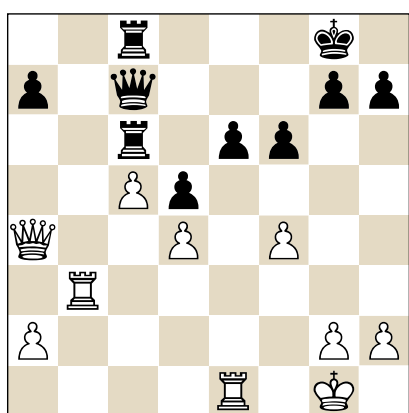


knew how many critical moments there would be to solve in the exercise (just like in a game!).

And I also got homework... more puzzles of course! I remember working at those in Steve's flat in Moscow while he watched the complete Pink Panther films in the background. Not easy cracking those positions while Peter Sellers is asking for 'a reum'. (You can take this test too: the exercises are given at the end of Chapter 4 of the same book. If you want to rep-

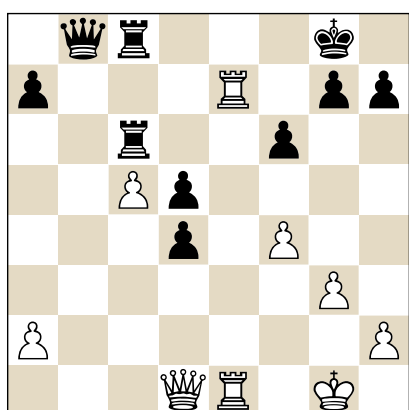
licate the entire ‘Matthew at Moscow’ experience, then search for ‘Do you have a reum’ on You Tube and play that in a loop while you solve them!)

My proudest moment was finding a hitherto unnoticed possibility in the game Hort-Mestel, London 1982.

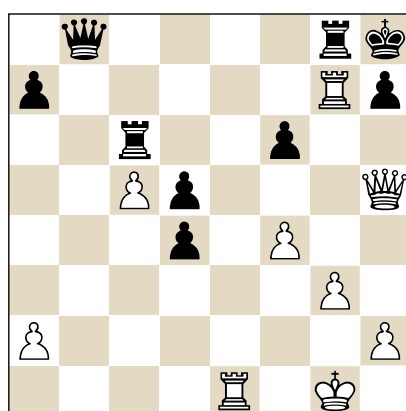


This was meant to be a training exercise for prophylaxis. White needs to defend the f4-pawn but he also needs to watch out for the ...e5 break. Hort played the fine move 25. ♖f3, which kept everything tight at the back, and won very easily. I spotted something slightly less prophylactic!

25.g3 e5 26. ♖be3 was my idea. The point is that White is planning to launch a kingside attack. Yes, I had a bit of a one-track mind in those days. **26...exd4 26...e4 27. ♖b3** is better for White, as the ...e5 break has been absorbed. White can prepare to invade on the b-file. **27. ♖e7 ♖b8 27... ♖d8 28. ♖e8+. 28. ♖d1** The first point: White brings his queen to bear on the Black kingside.



28... ♖h8 29. ♖h5 ♖g8 30. ♖xg7 The key to the whole idea. Unfortunately, it isn't 100% conclusive.



30... ♖xg7 31. ♖e8+ ♖g8 32. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 33. ♖xd5 ♖g7 34. ♖xd4 ♖b7 is better for White but certainly not won yet.

These two sessions were career-changing for me: I can't overstate the difference they made to my chess strength. Obviously, the most inspirational factor in those trainings was Mr. Dvoretsky himself, but there were two other important factors that made the sessions such a success:

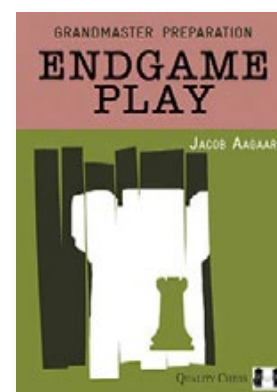
1. The enormously high quality of the material he used. Dvoretsky had tested all his exercises on many of the greatest chess talents in the world so there was precious little chance of finding any mistakes in them. That made it easy to concentrate fully on finding the solutions without being distracted by the nagging thought that the exercise is unsound (as often happens to me with standard puzzle books).
2. The variety of solving approaches used (against a time limit, played out as a game, etc...). The first condition made the second possible of course: you can't do anything with poor-quality material.

The biggest problem when trying to train yourself is finding that high-quality material, especially for endgames. Endgame books tend to rehash the same classic examples because original endgame analysis is very difficult to do well. That's why I'm so impressed with Aagaard's *Endgame Play*. All of the examples in the book have been played in the last ten years and probably 99% of them were new to me. The quality of analysis is absolutely top-notch as well

(also the case for *Attack & Defence*). I've worked my way through 156 exercises in *Endgame Play* and 104 exercises in *Attack & Defence* so far (never accuse your reviewer of not taking his duties seriously) and I've only had a couple where I thought I might have found another solution (which doesn't mean that I'm right...). I chatted with Jacob at the Scottish Blitz Championship in Edinburgh and he mentioned how much effort *Endgame Play* in particular had cost him (and also Karsten Müller, who helped him verify all the positions) and I can easily believe it. It's all been worthwhile in my opinion: it is superb.

I saw on the Quality Chess website a few days ago that a couple of German reviewers had given both books rather critical reviews. If I understood the German correctly (or rather, if Google Translate has not misled me) then both reviewers had doubts about

Grandmaster Preparation: Endgame Play
by Jacob Aagaard
Quality Chess, 2013



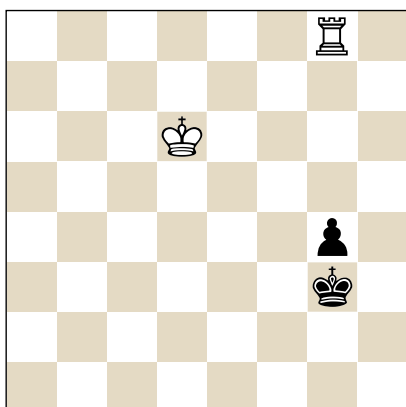
the level of difficulty of the material in the book (too high).

I understand the criticism but I don't think it's really fair. It is true that the material is not easy: even a GM can't solve them without some effort. On the other hand, I've been solving the exercises in both books during 20-minute train trips to work with a pretty good success rate so they are certainly not at the impossible scale of things. My experience so far is that there is a pretty good mix of easier and harder exercises. You can also make things tougher or easier for yourself as required. A GM may try to solve the positions in his head without moving the pieces within a short time limit. A weaker player will give himself plenty



of time and allow himself to move the pieces. And just like Dvoretsky, you can be creative too. While training for the Scottish Blitz Championship, I was looking for a way to improve my decision-making under restricted time conditions. So I started noting my initial reaction (within 10 seconds) on first seeing an exercise and then compared it afterwards with the actual solution once I'd solved the position. It was very interesting and gave me a few helpful clues: after a while I could see a pattern in my reactions in certain types of positions. However you do it, I sincerely believe that working through both these books is bound to improve your chess.

It doesn't quite feel right giving examples from a puzzle book, but there is one position that has stuck in my mind so I really want to share it with you. It's a wonderful exposition of the concept of shouldering:



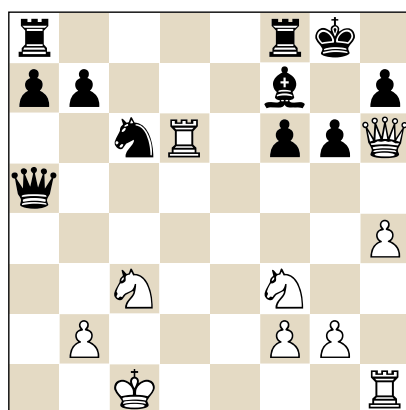
Jacob Aagaard, 2007

The black king has to move out of the way in order to let the pawn advance. Earlier in the chapter Aagaard had explained the concept of shouldering: the black king stops the white king from approaching the pawn by moving towards it.

1. ♖e5 is thus met by 1... ♜f3 2. ♜f8+ ♜e3, when White cannot get his king past Black's king. How should White play then? The answer is extremely neat: **1. ♜f8** Stopping the king from moving to the f-file. Amazingly, despite this loss of time, White's king is still in time to help stop the black pawn. Feels like magic! **1... ♜h2 2. ♜e5 g3 3. ♜f4 g2 4. ♜h8+ ♜g1 5. ♜g3 ♜f1 6. ♜f8+**

♜g1 7. ♜f7 7. ♜f2 ♜h1 draws. **7... ♜h1 8. ♜h7+ ♜g1 9. ♜h2** and White wins. In summary, hard work, but definitely worth it!

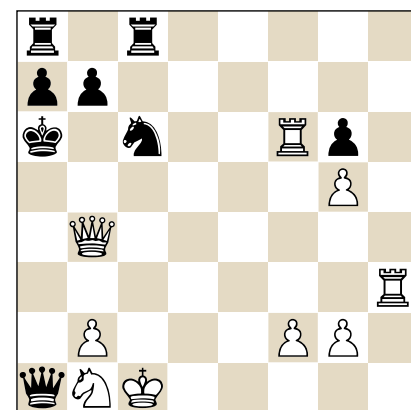
Mating the Castled King by Danny Gormally is 330 pages of attacking fun! The book is divided up into six chapters, of which Chapter 2 is by far the largest (about 160 pages). This chapter covers a huge amount of attacking themes against the white king, presented through 160 exercises: for example, 'Breakthrough on the g-file', 'Breakthrough on the h-file', 'Dragging out the King', 'Greek Gift Sacrifice'. The exercises are not too difficult and the explanations are pitched at a very good level – just enough variations to make sense of the position, but not too many to make your eyes glaze over. Gormally writes in a very entertaining and picturesque manner: I will never again be able to look at a white pawn on g6 without thinking 'Tower of Terror'! I used the book as an easy way to sharpen up in the morning before a recent rapid tournament and I felt it really helped. Once again, just as in the Aagaard books, I really appreciated the fact that so many of the examples in the book were unknown to me. I can't resist showing one gem to you, played almost 50 years ago by the author of the classic book *Chess for Tigers*. The comments are Gormally's:



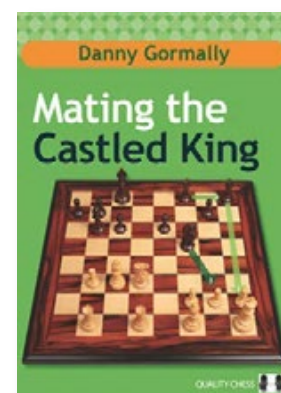
Simon Webb – Bernard Cafferty
Bristol 1968

19. ♜g5 Forcing open the h-file. **19... ♜a1+ 20. ♜b1 fxg5 21. hxg5 ♜fc8** Black now has serious threats of his own so White must strike quickly. **22. ♜xh7+ ♜f8 23. ♜h8+ ♜g8**

23... ♜e7 24. ♜f6+ ♜e8 25. ♜h8+ leads to mate. **24. ♜f6+** It is inaccurate to play **24. ♜f6+ ♜e8**, when **25. ♜e1+ ♜e5+** would be an embarrassing discovered check, turning the tables completely. **24... ♜e8 25. ♜xg8+ ♜d7 26. ♜e6+ ♜c7 27. ♜d6+ ♜b6 28. ♜b4+ ♜a6 29. ♜h3**



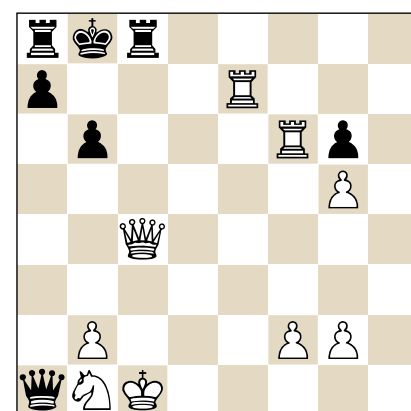
A strange position involving lots of pins, but the bottom line is that White is just winning. Simon Webb, who



Mating the Castled King
by Danny Gormally
Quality Chess, 2014

wrote one of my favourite books, *Chess for Tigers*, had clearly calculated this part of the game excellently.

29...b6 30. ♜c4+ ♜b7 31. ♜h7+ ♜e7 32. ♜xe7+ ♜b8



33. ♜xc8+ A great finish! (33... ♜xc8 34. ♜f8 mate.) ■

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Laurent Fressinet

CURRENT ELO: 2708

DATE OF BIRTH: November 30, 1981

PLACE OF BIRTH: Dax, France

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Paris, France



What is your favourite colour?

Blue.

What kind of food makes you happy?

Japanese.

And what drink?

Red wine.

Who is your favourite author?

Albert Camus.

What was the best book you ever read?

L'Ecume des jours (Froth on the Daydream) by Boris Vian.

What is your all-time favourite movie?

Fracture, with Anthony Hopkins and Ryan Gosling.

What is your favourite TV series?

Dexter, *House of Cards*.

Do you have a favourite actor?

Jack Nicholson, Anthony Hopkins.

And a favourite actress?

Meryl Streep.

What music do you like to listen to?

All kinds of music, but my favourite artist is the Belgian Jacques Brel.

Do you have a favourite painter?

Amedeo Modigliani.

What was your best result ever?

Winning a gold medal at the 2012 World Mind Games in Beijing.

What was your best game ever?

By far my victory against Kramnik in the 2013 Alekhine Memorial. ▶

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?

Kasparov. I studied his games since I was a kid and I always liked his style.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?

Des échecs à l'infini (Eternal Chess) by Karpov and Gik when I was starting out. Recently, I enjoyed the *My Great Predecessors* series, especially the volumes on the Kasparov-Karpov matches.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?

Karpov-Kasparov, 16th game of the second match in 1985 (0-1) was absolutely brilliant. ▶

What is the best chess country in the world?

Corsica, 'the land of chess'.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?

Logical reasoning.

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?

They have difficulties adjusting to the chaos of modern society.

What is it that you appreciate most in a person?

Open-mindedness.

What is it that you dislike in a person?

The dangerous blend of stupidity and wickedness.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?

No, I am not superstitious. It brings bad luck!

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?

John McEnroe, just to have the pleasure of shouting at the arbiter for once.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?

The Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama.

What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?

When I was 20, Yury Razuvaev opened my eyes to the importance of psychology in chess preparation. That it was way more important to understand how my opponent perceived me than the other way round. This also served me well in poker!

Is there something you'd love to learn?

To get my driving license before I turn 60!

What is your greatest fear?

Not to be able to see my kids grow up.

What would you save from your house if it were on fire?

My wife, my kids and probably my mother-in-law.

What will be the nationality of the 2050 World Champion?

Norwegian of course, but probably old and grumpy!

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?

Not the knowledge itself, but the learning process. This model is easily transposed to any other field, which gives you better chances to succeed.

“I am really happy that my favourite magazine is now available on iPad”
- Judit Polgar -



2014#5



2014#4



2014#3



2013#8

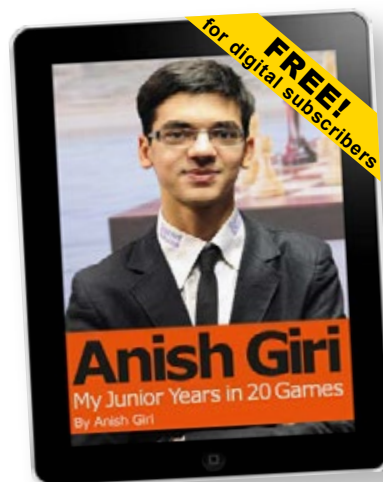


2014#1



2014#2

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